

#61 Spring/Summer  
2006, vol. 24, no. 1

# A Journal of Desire Armed

# Anarchy

## a(nthro)pologies

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**Ted Kaczynski Interview:  
Primitivist Myths**

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Toward a society based on mutual aid, voluntary cooperation & the liberation of desire



# Opportunities\*

by Lawrence Jarach

The recent string of arrests and indictments of anarchists across the United States and Europe should come as no surprise. With increased visibility at various large and small protests, anarchists have begun to instill the same kind of panic among polite society as they did in the 1880s. What is surprising is the kind of commotion the forces of law and order are trying to stir up when attempting to show just how dangerous these various anarchists are. The captured anarchists in the US are all environmental activists who are supposedly associated with the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) or the Animal Liberation Front (ALF); the affidavits of the federal officials involved in the cases throw around the terms anarchist and ELF/ALF as if they were synonymous. While the total number of anarchists is still relatively small, the FBI and other cops would have the public believe that the ELF and ALF are the most dangerous terrorists in the US today. The irony (if there is any in such a situation) is that, unlike the actions of 9-11, abortion clinic bombings, gay bashings, and racially motivated assaults, no actions claimed by either the ELF or ALF have resulted in the death or even injury of a single person. Whatever "terror" is being instilled by the alleged acts of property destruction is the terror of corporate executives losing thousands of dollars, and the terror of the forces of law and order at being shown to be ineffective at preventing and punishing crime. It is only the use of informants/provocateurs and those who have crumbled under the threat of exceedingly harsh sentences that has allowed the FBI to make any cases at all.

With the unwanted attention from law enforcers, anarchist activists have placed a renewed stress on what has been termed Security Culture. While murky in the actual details, the general advice (from those who are supposed to know) remains limited to never using one's legal name, always masking up at demos, and only talking to trusted comrades. This kind of posturing almost inevitably creates a hierarchy of values concerning the activities and projects of those who Get Shit Done. If you are serious you will opt for the semi-clandestine—often extra-legal—lifestyle promoted by

the mythology of Security Culture; others are judged to be neither serious nor effective. However, the majority of the North American arrests were precipitated by the infiltration of snitches into the radical environmental milieu; this should cause people to question both the fetish of Security Culture as well as how it has been honored mostly in the breach. Bragging about one's accomplishments and invulnerability would seem to fall outside the parameters of good sense, let alone Security Culture.

Anarchists have had an organizational form for decades that precludes the supposed need for Security Culture: the affinity group. Not the phony affinity group model adopted by the American anti-nuclear/peace movement of the late 1970s-early 80s, which still holds sway over most of the current generation of activists, but real *grupos de afinidad*.

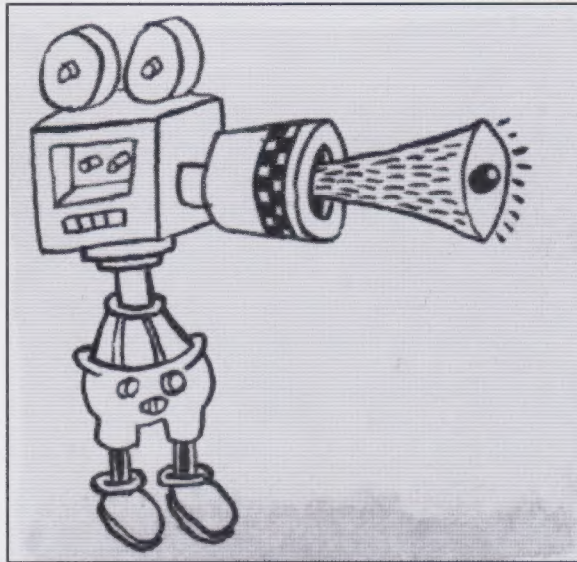
Based on strong friendships, enduring relationships, and—most importantly—agreement on political perspective, authentic affinity groups are impossible to infiltrate. But in order to discover if

people share affinity, we must get to know each other. Not the knowledge of recognizing comrades at various demos or actions or meetings, but a deep knowledge of our respective political analyses; how we arrived at those analyses; who inspires us; having discussions about the history of and the current issues within our tendencies; and probably getting into arguments about all of it. Knowing where we differ from one another allows us to gain better insight into what we actually agree on.

Before activists make a decision to engage in semi-legal or extra-legal action, it would be wise for them to know—re-

ally know—who their comrades are, what they think about the action, and more importantly, if they can be counted on to keep quiet by not bragging to other activists, and not rolling over if caught. Looking at the history of the legal oppression directed at anarchists, the affinity group model, while not perfect, has succeeded far better than anything offered by those who invoke the slogan of Security Culture.

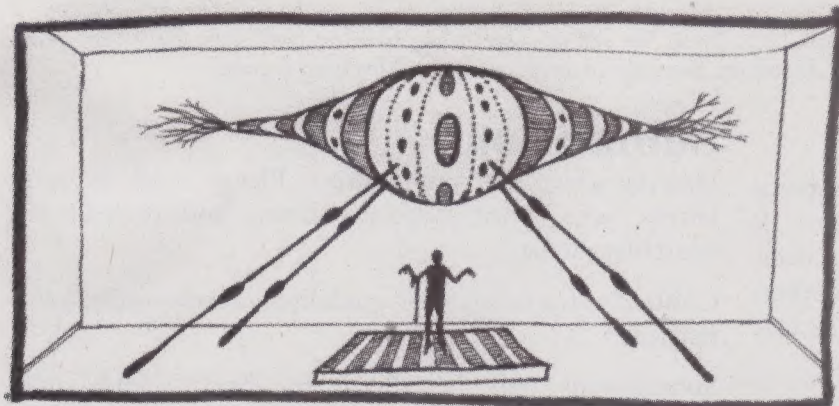
\*The opportunity to secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself. - Sun Tzu



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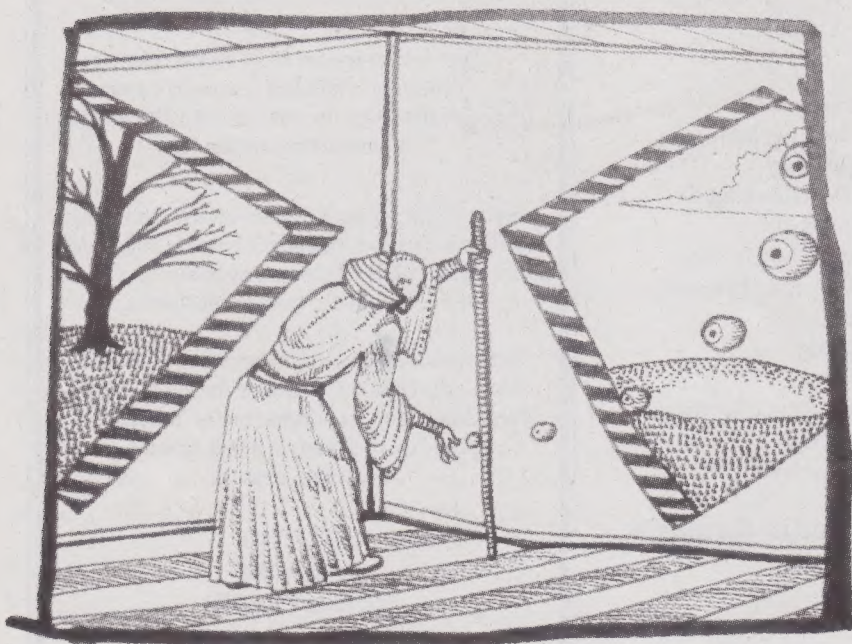
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*John Henri*





# Inside Anarchy

The Bay Area Anarchy Collective is pleased to bring you our third issue, one with the theme of anthropology, presenting articles highly critical of the tradition and ones that are firmly based in it.

The past several months have included days of anarchist activities, many of them focused around the week in March that include the anarchist bookfair and the Berkeley Anarchist Students for Theory And Research & Development (BASTARD) conference. The conference this year was one of the best ever, with workshops on anarchy and aging, situationist-based analysis of urban design, utopian thinking, anarchist history, Brazilian somatic therapeutic systems, and more.

Recent events also involve the arrests and betrayals of friends and colleagues alleged to be involved in extra-legal activities. The news of wires and moles in our midst has had the west coast humming for months, and the arrests continue. We can only hope that we will all learn the important subtle as well as obvious lessons from these happenings. The group The Brilliant has a piece in this issue that speaks to this situation, as does our editorial.

Further sad news includes the death of Paul Avrich, who should need no introduction as a pre-eminent historian of anarchism, author of multiple books ranging from Russian Anarchists to Voltairine de Cleyre to oral histories of anarchists in the US. He will be sorely missed.

The Recent Events department has an inspiring communiqué from the Sorbonne Committee in Exile and information about arrests of anarchists in Barcelona.

And of course we have more art from our wonderful pool of artists.

The letters department presents a section with excerpts from an interaction on our webpage: a

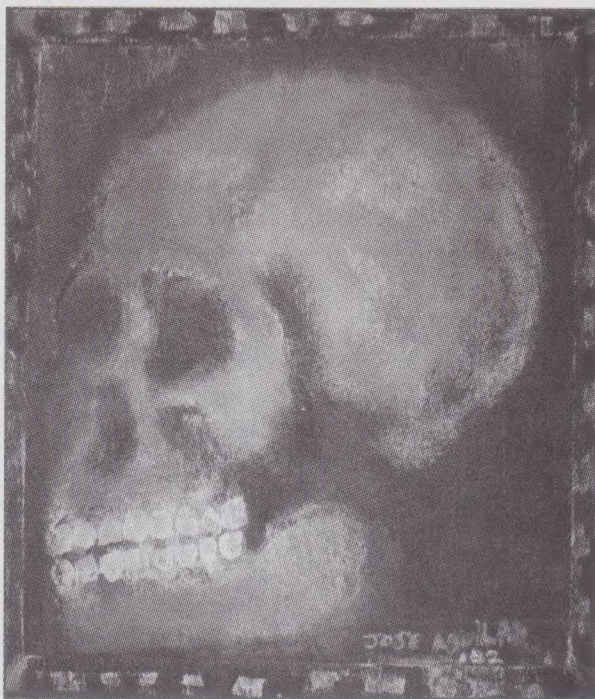
member of North Eastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (NEFAC) responds to the review of *Northeastern Anarchist* from last issue. When the website offers up interesting conversations, we will be sharing them with you, and of course you can also visit the website yourself to get the full flavor, and to participate. The website also has a variety of extras including downloadable wallpaper and our brand new monthly podcast for registered users as well as access to back issues (with more on the way) and t-shirt sales.

Columns this issue include another installment of our surreal tribute to the space age, the Oakland Triple A, as well as Ben Blue's continuing explorations of the occasionally wandering lines between an individual and the rest of the universe in "Loose Canons," and Aragorn's always challenging column on strategy.

But of course the main course of this issue is anthropology, from the Anarchy 101 column, to excerpts of an interview conducted via mail between Ted Kaczynski and a Turkish anarchist group, Veganarsý, critical analysis of the field by Dot and Lawrence, and reviews of anthropological texts *The State* and *Original Wisdom*.

We look forward to hearing your responses to these very different takes on this topic.

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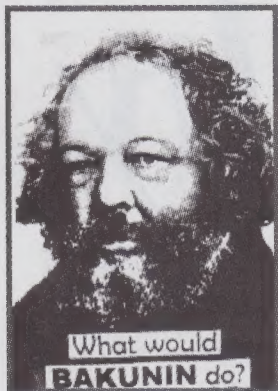


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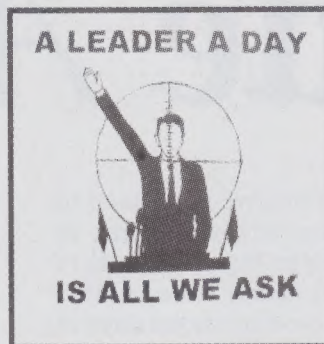
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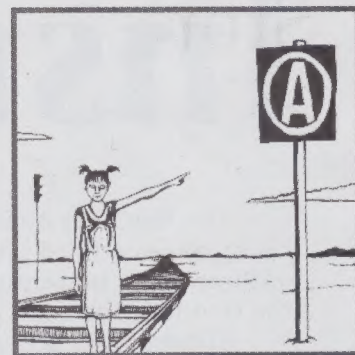
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graphic on front  
(above); specify size,  
color and anarchist  
(Voltairine or Bakunin)



**Girl on Bike**  
graphic on front  
(above); specify size and  
color



**A Leader a Day**  
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# Stories of People, Not Chess Pieces

Paul Avrich (1931-2006)

by Barry Pateman

The death of Paul Avrich has taken from anarchism its finest historian. More than that the study of history has also lost one of its finest proponents because Avrich was also a great historian. If his work brought to life those who shared "the beautiful ideal" it was because he used his considerable talents to treat his subjects with respect, thus avoiding the glib condescension that characterized much of what constituted "anarchist history" in the academy. Avrich's work reflected his skills as a linguist, the absolute importance he placed on primary sources and his perseverance in finding them, an ability to sustain long, and sometimes fruitless periods of research, and a writing style that enabled him to encapsulate his findings in a readable and engaging manner. Central to all of this was a consistent and rigorous insistence on accuracy. He went further, looked deeper and reflected more pertinently than others. He allowed anarchist voices, missing from history, to speak for themselves, with a minimal of authorial judgment or intervention; much of what we know about the history of anarchism in America is due to the work of this one man.

His work on anarchism in Russia formed the first half of Avrich's published career. His first book, *The Russian Anarchists* (1967) was a model of what we would come to expect.

Succinct, readable and yet packed with information reflecting Avrich's use of primary sources, it brought to English speaking minds a lost history. He clearly stressed the constructive qualities of anarchism from 1917 onwards, developing his earlier dissertation on "The Russian Revolution and the Factory Committees." It also reflected, as much of his work would do, one of the primary tensions in anarchism, between those who search for organizational structure to support their anarchist ideas and those who are far more wary of any organizational apparatus. He treated the relationship of anarchism and violence with scrupulous fairness and rigor, an approach that ran throughout all of his writing, and reflected confidently the nuances and complexities of anarchism in Russia.

His work *Kronstadt 1921* (1970) destroyed the Bolshevik myth of Kronstadt being a counter-revolutionary center whose vibrant revolutionary movement had long been dissipated. On the contrary, to Avrich, it was in effect a last ditch stand against the centralizing, counter revolu-

tionary excesses of Bolshevism. Again scrupulously documented, the work brought what had long been known in anarchist circles to a much wider audience. *Russian Rebels 1600-1800* (1972) continued his interest in the revolutionary heritage in Russia and, again, was unflinching in its examination of its subjects. His groundbreaking *Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* (1973) completed what we may call the first phase of his work. A collection of primary documents interspersed with appropriate editorial commentary it allowed the reader to see and read, often for the first time, the words of the Russian anarchists themselves. From the swirling and tremulous words of the Anarcho-Futurists to the Petropavlovsk Resolution of Kronstadt we see the reach and range of Russian anarchism.

In the preface to *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (1978) a work in memory of Max Nettlau, himself a great historian of anarchism, Avrich writes of abandoning his project of producing a comprehensive history of American anarchism writing that "a fuller examination of the materials at my disposal, together with the discovery of new sources, aroused a growing sense of the complexity of the movement, of the richness and diversity of its history." The rest of his life would be spent exploring that complexity, richness and diversity. He also found his methodology. He would explore the lives of those who played a role in the movement because "From most existing accounts ...one gets little understanding of the anarchists as human beings, still less of what impelled them to embark on their unpopular and seemingly futile course. Anarchism, as a result, has seemed a movement apart, unreal and quixotic, divorced from American history and irrelevant to American life." His work on de Cleyre was a brilliant introduction to this complex and anguished woman. We quickly become aware of the fierce quicksilver mind she possesses and realize, through Avrich's deftness, that we are in the presence of some kind of greatness. Written nearly thirty years ago it remains unsurpassed as a narrative of her life and an appreciation of



the multi-faceted nature of her ideas. Through the interactions that constitute her life a history of anarchism also begins to emerge.

Avrich's two greatest works now lay ahead of him. *The Modern School*, dedicated to anarchist librarian Agnes Inglis, (1980) is a jewel of a book. It describes a moment in American anarchist history where culture and militancy met. Nearly every line drips with original research; the narrative is clear and precise, linking complex and apparently contradictory themes and helping the reader decipher them. If the work on de Cleyre has not convinced us, his work here makes it crystal clear that American anarchism was much more than Benjamin Tucker, Emma Goldman, and Alexander Berkman. *The Modern School* rightfully re-establishes many lives previously lost to the historian as critical players in the attempt to create anarchy in America. Avrich is re-defining our knowledge, our expectations and our appreciations. It is a book to read and re-read and like all great works each re-reading teaches us something new. So too with his next major work, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (1984), dedicated to Joseph Labadie, which continued the standard he had set himself. Using original sources he creates an unforgettable picture of anarchist practice and culture. The heroism and tragedy of the whole affair are presented to us in a highly readable narrative. People are presented to us as fully rounded with their flaws as obvious as their strengths. A seminal event in American radical history is presented to us clearly yet passionately. It is *the* book on Haymarket, *the* book on late

*continued on page 10*



# A THOUSAND REASONS TO KEEP FIGHTING

*In Spain there is torture as in medieval China.*

On January 31st 2006, the public prosecutor asked for 5 to 113 years imprisonment for the anarchist comrades arrested in Barcelona in September 2003. Four of them have already spent two and a half years imprisoned without trial. On February 2nd, seven people were arrested after a unjustified police intervention on a private party, where a local police officer was severely wounded in the head due to the violent situation provoked by the same police forces. Two of them were imprisoned at a hospital where they had gone due to a bike accident that they had in a totally different area. Three people were imprisoned with charges of attempted homicide.

*Solidarity with Ruben and Ignasi.  
Free anarchist prisoners!*

We suffered yet another repressive act. Our comrades Ruben and Ignasi were kidnapped the morning of February 9th by Catalan police mossos d'esquadra and court No. 13 of Barcelona. They're accused of two acts of sabotage and also accused of being part

of anti-prison and prisoner support groups. Their solidarity and political activism outside the boundaries of pseudo-fights allowed and enforced by democracy have fallen under the repressive set of laws.

Now Ruben and Ignasi are held at prisons not far away from the city of Barcelona. These first days are tough because it's extremely difficult to get to know some information of where they are or how they feel. This is taking lots of time and energy (guess that's precisely the point of bureaucracy!), but we feel it's important that they know (and that we ourselves know) that we're still here, that life goes on and so does our libertarian fight!

The judge is made to look like an honorable and respectable person who carries an important social task. Police, nicely provocative and violent, are seen as protectors of security and freedom. Abuses of immigrants are seen as something necessary to maintain social peace. Destruction of the earth, of the neighborhoods, of our living places and our own liberated spaces... is justified in the name of progress and social welfare.

Meanwhile they hide the economic benefits of banks, building estates and political parasites. "Worker's regulations" and ongoing worsening of their rights precarizes labour's conditions, squeezing restlessly all those people who have to work in order to survive. Banks' announcements of their highest benefits ever last year are due to this exploitation and the huge debts acquired by lots of people trapped into a society based on consumerism and private property. The "good citizenship" set of laws, which are publicised as ideal ways of social behavior is simply about more control, more repression and more isolation against those people that, due to their vulnerability, are easily pointed at and abused by state's institutions; the same is done to political dissidence that don't have access to (or don't want to be at) the "show windows" of what is becoming a huge "city of design."

Ruben and Ignasi are not alone in prison; those imprisoned at the riots of Sant Pere Mes Baix street are not alone, neither the anarchists arrested in September 2003 who will face very long sentences, neither any person isolated at police stations, immigrants, people from the hoods will not be left alone... 'cause here we are, here we have a thousand reasons to keep fighting.



**La Lucha nos hace libres  
La solidaridad, dignos**

**Jueves 23 de febrero**  
**MANIFESTACION en BILBO**  
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¡Rubén e Ignasi libertad!

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ALONE! ACTIVE SOLIDARITY!  
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# The Sorbonne Occupation

## Committee in Exile - Communique 4

Monday, March 20, 2006

The Sorbonne with its airs of eternity. Full of suspended history. Marble hallways like a frozen swamp. "When there is no sun, learn to ripen under the ice." Then ten days ago, the ice started melting, one evening in centuries. A fire of tables and final papers: a flame higher than any man, in the middle of the quad, the quad of ceremonies. No more murmurs in the lecture halls, and in the hallways, no more discourses, just jostling together, searching for a structure. It begins. Projectiles, screams, fire extinguishers, chairs, ladders, against the cops. A monster awakens.

The authorities are stupid. They run around. They think that by evicting us they have destroyed the blast that emerged here. Fools. Fools as dull and the heavy thud of a computer on the helmet of a riot cop. By sending us in exile they only broadened our field of action. They will get their just desserts for taking from us our Sorbonne, for having dispossessed us. By installing their police here, they offered the Sorbonne to all the dispossessed. At this hour when we are writing this the Sorbonne does not belong to the students anymore, it belongs to all those who, by the word or the cocktail, mean to defend it.

Since our exile, we've had some thoughts on the state of the movement.

Revision 1: We are fighting against a law passed with a majority vote by a legitimate parliament. Our simple existence proves that the democratic principle of majority vote is questionable, it proves that the myth of the sovereignty of the general assembly can be usurped. It is part of our struggle to limit, as much as possible, the tyranny of the majority vote. All that space given to the general assemblies paralyzes us and only serves to confer legitimacy on paper to a bunch of wannabe bureaucrats. The assemblies are neutralizing all initiative by establishing a theatrical separation between the word and the act. Once the vote has been cast for a strike until the withdrawal of the law for equal opportunity, the general assemblies should become a space of endless debate, a space for sharing experiences, ideas, and desires, a place where we constitute our strength, not a scene of petty power struggles and intrigues for swaying the decision.

Revision 2: The union bureaucracies, even though they continue with their habitual ma-

nipulations, are not as serious an obstacle to the real movement as the reflexes of pacifism that spread amongst us. The night of the eviction of the Sorbonne, part of the students had no idea why they were there or what they could do, let alone what they should do. They were wandering in anguish of the freedom offered but impossible to grasp, because it was not desired. A week later, after numerous occupations and confrontations with the police, their asserted impotence is finally giving place to an innocent taste for direct action. Pacifism finally becomes what it has never stopped being: a benign existential pathology.

Revision 3: The struggle belongs to those who fight, not to those who want to control it.

Revision 4: The constant movement, the circulation of everything is a paradoxical condition for the functioning of the capitalist machine. In the same paradox, interrupting its functioning is a condition for its disruption. By the blockades, we are fighting against the total freeze of the situation they want to impose.

Revision 5: We are referring to 68, it is true, but we are referring not to what actually happened in 68, to the folklore, the occupied Sorbonne back then, the barricades in the Latin Quarter, we are referring to what did not happen in 68, the revolutionary turmoil that did not take place. By casting us in the past, some would like to extract us from the present situation and to make lose the strategic understanding of it. By treating 68 as a simple student movement, they would like to dismiss the still present menace of what 68 could have been, a savage general strike, a burst of a human strike.

Revision 6: The idea of democratically debating every day those who are against the strike on the renewal of the strike is absurd. The strike has never been a democratic practice, but a political accomplished fact, an immediate expropriation, a relationship of power. No one has ever voted the establishment of capitalism. Those who oppose the strike are

de facto standing on the other side of the barricade, and the only exchange we could have with them is of insults, punches and rotten eggs. In the face of referendums set up to break the strike, the only thing to do is to eliminate them by all means necessary.

Revision 7: A strange idea haunts this movement, the idea of occupying university build-



ings only during work hours. This is an occupation that does not liberate space. An occupation where firefighters, administrators, and pretexts of authority and safety continue to make us childish, and where the university will remain simply a university. It's true that once we've taken over this space, we would need to populate

We have to embrace with serenity the fact that there will be no return to normal, and then inhabit this irreversibility.

it, populate it with things other than the desire to return to normal. We have to embrace with serenity the fact that there will be no return to normal, and then inhabit this irreversibility.

Revision 8: National coordination reflects the sterility of a certain classic notion of politics. The unionists, the million leftist groups and groupings offer to lifeless general assemblies platforms writ-

*continued on page 10*



## recent events

Communique continued from page 9

ten in advance by their leadership. In atmosphere approaching that of yet another party congress, the national coordination displays nothing but a soviet-style power play between the "orgs." We propose instead the idea of a parallel coordination following the example of the high-school students' movement of last year, an open coordination (*consulta*) that is nothing but a temporary space to refine a national strategy.

Revision 9: We are the heirs of the failure of all the "social movements" and just those of the last three years (teachers, retirees, seasonal workers, high-school students), but all the once since at least 1986. We have learned some lessons from these failures. The first is about the medias. By becoming the echo of the movement, the media effectively become a part of it, a part which, when it pulls out (usually at the same time as the union bureaucracies) provokes the movement's collapse. The strength of a movement is in its effective power, not in what is being said about it, and

the malicious gossip about it. The movement must protect itself by all means, even by force if necessary, from the grasp of the media. It must develop its own voice.

Revision 10: None of the "social movements" of recent years has achieved in months of "struggle" what the insurgents of November discretely obtained in three weeks of riots – cuts to public assistance in the affected areas were suspended, funding for local programs was reinstated. All of this without making any demands. Demanding means defining your existence in the mutilating terms of those in power; it means conceding an advantage to the enemy. Even from the point of view of those who want to gain certain things it is stupid.

Revision 11: This is the end of the marches and the days of action declared by central committee. Only wild demonstrations and occupations from now on. The assembly of strikers in Rennes already prefers demonstra-

tions with "intuitive routes," and refuses to submit to the routes ordained by the police and its henchmen. Even their marshals have changed their role, and their name; they are now the "action division" and are preparing for confrontations with the police.

Revision 12: No one has the right to tell us that what we are doing is "illegitimate." We don't have to see ourselves as spectators of the struggle, even less should we see ourselves from the point of view of the enemy. Legitimacy belongs to those who believe in what their actions, to those who know what they are doing, and why they are doing it. This idea of legitimacy is obviously opposed to that of the State, majority, and representation. It does not submit to the same rationales, it imposes its own rationales. If the politicizing consists in a struggle of different legitimacies, of different ideas of happiness, our task from now on is to give means to this struggle with no other limit but what appears to us to be just and joyful.

Avrich continued from page 7

nineteenth century class struggle anarchism and culture and a volume to treasure.

*Anarchist Portraits* (1988), dedicated to Arne Thorne (a profound influence on Avrich) is a collection of essays on a wide range of subjects. All reflect Avrich's customary elegance. He is as much at ease writing about the Australian anarchist "Chummy" Fleming as he is discussing "Kropotkin's Ethical Anarchism." His essay on Jewish anarchism in the United States is essential reading while his sketch of Alexander Berkman's life remains a most valuable template. His essay "Sacco and Vanzetti: The

Italian Anarchist Background" is the forerunner of his next volume, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (1991). Here again Avrich examines a critical event in the history of the left in America and through his biographical style brings individuals and their ideas to life. The

remarkable human qualities of many of the anarchists are clearly drawn as well as their inconsistencies and flaws. The violence that runs through this period of history is portrayed straightforwardly without any attempt to judge or moralize.

As a result Sacco and Vanzetti, and all the others who were in their affinity groups, are presented in their richness and complexity. A richness and complexity no one else had been able to reflect. A by-product of his biographical approach is that we are guided through the history of anti-organizational and insurrectionary Italian class struggle anarchism of the period in a manner that brings life and meaning to its theory and actions.

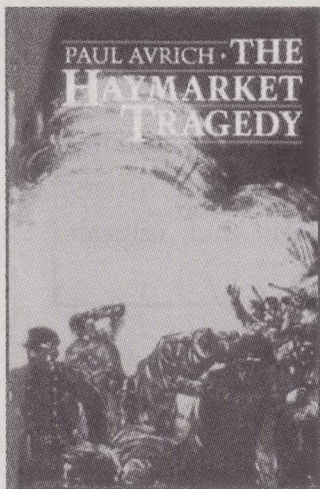
Finally *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism In America* (1996). Many of Avrich's interviews with anarchist activists from the early twentieth century onwards are transcribed and recorded here. It is essential reading. Of course memories will play tricks and Avrich's footnotes gently corrects errors. Yet this volume reminds us that anarchism is not just what we read in anarchist papers or in the pamphlets and books regularly circulated. Anarchism is also those, who by their actions, make up the movement; they sat and listened to Goldman speak, they went to the Modern Schools, they helped sell papers, financed comrades on the run, lived in the colonies, became jaundiced or never gave up. They put the stamps on the papers when they were mailed out. They gave life to words. How refreshing to hear these voices at last and how exciting to see our understanding of anarchism so broadened and enriched.

Much remains to be done to complete the work started by Paul Avrich (It is to be hoped that his long-worked-on life of Alexander Berkman will see the light of day) and we should finish by making some final comments on his legacy. Firstly he implicitly realized that

we were still at the discovery stage. There is still much to learn and tease out about the history of anarchism. Much spade work and slog still need to be done to discover anarchist history. We can, though, learn from Avrich's refusal to condescend to the people that made up his histories. He did not have a clever theory and try to prove it, a methodology that treats its subjects like chess pieces rather than people. Instead he preferred to let the facts and events guide him to any conclusions he might make. He did not judge and he did not try to explain actions that took place a hundred years ago with the reasoning of today. For him the discovery and telling of the story was the most important thing and how well we and his subjects benefited from that approach.

In person he was lovely and enormously helpful to all who came to him with questions. Students and activists and fellow scholars all benefited from his knowledge. He must have known he was the gold standard ("what does Avrich say?") yet there was no arrogance, just a desire to share and help. He was spare with his criticism, preferring to remain silent rather than chastise. If he offered praise and encouragement it meant the world to the recipient. One could ask for no finer praise from any source.

When he began his studies, Avrich was chastised by his tutor for studying those who had "lost." It is an interesting thought that his honest and thorough approach grounded in primary sources may well have given anarchists, should they choose to read him, some of the tools to succeed.





# Security Culture and its Discontents

by The Brilliant

Operation Backfire, the FBI operation that has led to the arrest over the past few months of dozens of so-called eco-terrorists has had a dimming effect on the direct action movement. The idea that property destruction, without injury or loss of human life, had a certain cachet, threading the needle between the Weatherman movement of the 1970s and the protests of the tree-sitting and sign-carrying variety. In America this idea was clearly naive as murderers are often given much lighter sentences than drug offenders.

After the burning of the Vail ski resort on October 18, 1998 there could have been no doubt that the government would launch a major investigation against the ELF and associated environmental groups. At least twelve million dollars of damage was caused in one evening and at least one agency suffered a black eye as a result. The insertion of the now infamous "Anna" into the protest movement should be seen for what it is, a reconnaissance mission, not the primary attack.

The ability of "Anna" to act as a street medic, a journalist (on several Indymedia sites), and eventually the bait to entrap several young radicals does not represent a problem with how porous our communities are. It demonstrates how inexperienced our generation is with real government attack.

This has been further demonstrated by the surprise and horror that supporters of the Operation Backfire prisoners have had when the accused became complicit with their captors. Many of the accused had moved on with their lives and away from radical politics. During the actions that they are being accused of, many of them were very young and new to radicalism. Many were reaching far beyond their grasp and upon realizing this retreated away from the positions, choices, and groups that informed the property destruction they are accused of. People cannot

stand up to torture, isolation, or even social pressure forever. The surprise should be that anyone stays around obscure radical circles or holds the line against forces of repression at all. Many of us have seen what the science of control technologies and the realities of prison life does to strong people. Propaganda creates social isolation and the sense that even simple positions are aberrant. While there is a certain dignity in obscurity and pride in exclusivity, what is the cost?



We are sick of hiding in shadows!

We do not believe that anything, or nearly anything, that we do is truly hidden from eyes that are looking in our direction. We believe that if they want to find us they are more than capable. We are too few and they have too many resources to bring to bear. We do not believe that anything that we do, except the most blatantly scandalous, should be hidden behind false names, secret communication, and indecipherable jargon.

The only secrets should be secrets and not the possible existence of secrets.

We believe, in our heart of hearts, that our security culture friends embarrass us. Security culture is the half-assed practice of confusing our desire for a different world with a tree house that doesn't allow those with cooties to enter. Our pretensions of illegality and danger look exactly like what they are, children at play. As long as anarchists remain children we will be treated as such, by our potential allies, by our enemies, and by ourselves.

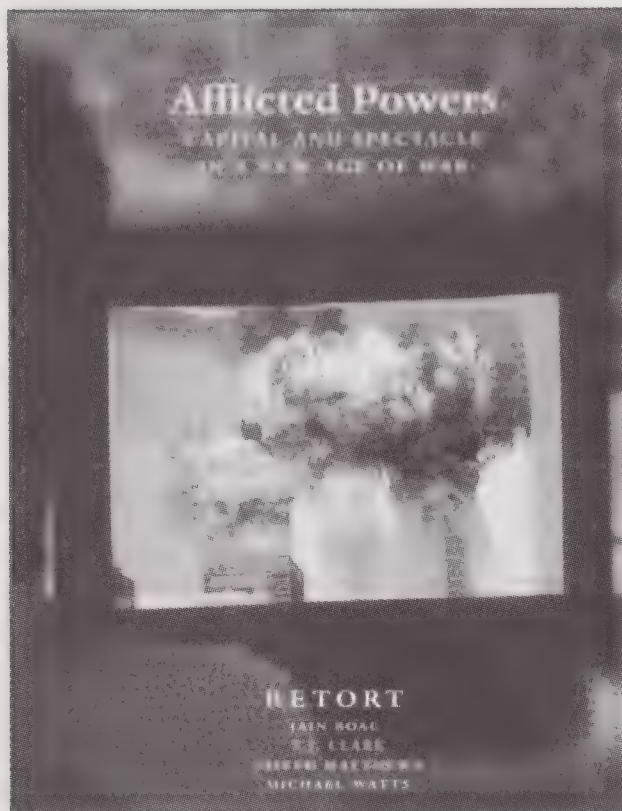
If we really were planning to wage war upon those in power, rather than just have it waged upon us, we would need people from all walks of life to understand where we were coming from. We would need the brilliance of our vision of a better world to shine so brightly as to suffocate thoughts of this one. Our ideas are ideas of transparency, individual capability, and solidarity. Why should we hide these ideas? Even if the only expressions that we can offer of our choices are of petty theft and marginal living why should we live in shame? No one chooses to live in shame for long. Shame will kill us faster than the State will ever find us. An atmosphere of secrets and group-think isolates us into sub-culture that includes only our peers.

Our ideas are brilliant. We deeply believe that the majority of the world basks in the light of the same sun that we are shielded from by the State and Capitalism. We survive on a fraction of what is possible. Those who shield us feast upon the bulk of the sustenance. From below, above, and without we have another solution. Be gone interlopers! We will wear no masks when we tear your creations asunder. They stand in our way. They stand in the way of the brilliant!



# Too Much & Not Enough

Reviewed by Dave Negation



*Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* by Retort (Verso, London/New York 2005), paper, 224 pages, \$16

In the introduction to *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (hereafter *AP*), the authors claim that the post-September 11 world (especially in light of the bloody US campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq), “demands... an interrogation of the very terms and forms of politics.” Whatever strengths the book may have, *AP* does not deeply examine our society. The authors fail at the task they set themselves from the outset. Retort, the Bay Area group that authored the book, nonetheless has one great talent. They are good at criticizing radicals, and skillfully cut through a lot of supposedly radical babble. For this reason alone, *AP* deserves to be widely read and discussed.

*AP* takes as its starting point the

worldwide protests of February 15, 2003 against war with Iraq. Retort saw these protests as a hopeful moment, when people assembled as “never before... against the wishes of parties and states, to stop a war before it began.” The “multitude” of these protests, however, did not stop the war, and opposition to the US War on Terror must now confront its past theoretical and practical weaknesses. The task for our times is of “reassembling our Afflicted Powers,” as Retort quotes from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, to “consult how we may henceforth most offend/Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,/How overcome this dire Calamity,/What reinforcement we may gain from Hope,/If not what resolution from

despair.”

The book’s analysis is heavily influenced by the efforts of the Situationist International, the organization perhaps most responsible for the high water mark of ‘60s radical theory. One member of Retort was briefly a member of the Situationist International decades ago. Retort wheels out dead Situationist theoretician Guy Debord for a central thesis: our society is one of the Spectacle, and September 11, 2001’s “precision strikes” took place on the “spectacular” terrain. In *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord presented a brilliant theory of modern social conditions, arguing that:

Images detached from every aspect of life merge into a common stream, and the former unity of life is lost forever. Apprehended in a *partial* way, reality unfolds in a new generality as a pseudo-world apart,

solely as an object of contemplation.... The spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of communication. ...The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images. (*Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Theses 2 – 4)

Thus a *Videodrome* world, where the image no longer signifies an element of genuine social life prone to human intervention, but rather despotizes and mediates this life in its very insignificance, as something apart from it. Debord was careful to designate spectacular society as a particular historical era, beginning once WWII drew to an end, rival superpowers carved the world into blocs, and a postwar economic boom created the technical means for this dystopian production. The spectacular era continues to this day. It is a logical continuation of capitalist development: “The spectacle is *capital* accumulated to the point where it becomes image.”

Retort correctly views the theory of the spectacle as one of modern capitalism but vulgarize this theory, treating it primarily as a critique of “the deadly solicitations of the market” (presumably advertising, television, and mass media) rather than of all that currently “appears as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of communication.” Retort’s “minimal, pragmatic and matter of fact” definition of the spectacle is itself no mortal sin, except perhaps to self-proclaimed guardians of the Situationist legacy. However, in a diminished state, the concept of the spectacle ceases to convincingly explain the contours of recent tumult. Retort gets around this by simply treating this minimum theory as Debord’s maximum one whenever needed, while ignoring the maximum theory’s logical consequences. With such an approach, Retort manages to simultaneously say too much and too little in the book, while both over- and underestimating the



spectacle. Compared to this feat, Retort's criticism of Debord, that he exaggerated the "totalizing closure" of the spectacle, is enough to make even Debord-haters mourn the old French alcoholic.

Retort's treatment of September 11, 2001, brings all these problems into focus. The authors "proceed... unwillingly, from the image on the screen," "a moving image of capitalism screaming and exploding." They contend "the terrorists... followed the logic of the spectacle to its charnel-house conclusion," yet that their actions were also a "riposte" to our society. The "riposte" simultaneously took place as demolition in New York City and Washington, DC, and also as an *image* of vengeance, horror and devastation that spread throughout the entire social body. Following such events, "the spectacular state is obliged... to devise an answer to the defeat of September 11. And it seems it cannot." The War on Terror and its campaigns are attempts to respond to this defeat.

The problem with Retort's explanation is not that Iraq has now turned into a full-fledged quagmire for the US state. The authors agree—the US still hasn't found its answer; it is bloodily blundering along without one. The errors of the US state perhaps point to its reliance on spectacular logic. If this is the case, what is accurate about describing the spectacle in minimal, rather than encompassing terms? The authors preemptively dodge the question, addressing instead Debord's prose style. Their evasion is deliberate; if the spectacle is viewed as encompassing rather than partial, it could be argued that the September 11 actions were not any form of resistance; instead, they were a total surrender to the terms of a spectacular system. (Surrender to this system always carries a body count.) In other words, just how much of a riposte was the "riposte"? When the authors later attempt to tackle the question head on, the best they are able to come up with are a few confused comments about "weak citizenship" within the global north. Here the authors need reminding that the surge of patriotism in the US following September 11 was neither a sign of weak citizenship nor of strong citizenship, whatever such terms may mean. The patriotic rigamarole was a sign of citizenship *per se*, the willingness of millions to believe that they have some sort of interest in common with their nation-state, despite all evidence to the contrary. What keeps huge swathes of people accepting such propositions? When he was a coherent member of the Situationist International,

Raoul Vaneigem put forward one idea on the subject in his book *The Revolution of Everyday Life*: "In their common respect for rulers, antagonistic powers have always fostered the seeds of their future coexistence." Our society's antagonisms, insofar as they are not radical, keep us tied to its base propositions. Vaneigem made his statement when the Left was one pole of the major political antagonism of the day (It is odd that Retort says very little about the end of the USSR). The Situationists were part of a broader current that considered this Left to be merely the left wing of capitalism and of political gangsterism; they treated the Left with contempt. Retort has quite different ideas: "However weak and compromised the term has become... the Left remains the name—the best name, the placeholder, the banner soaked in blood—for this last best hope of mankind." This is because currently "battle is joined between two virulent mutations of the Right," while the Left remains defeated yet alive. The Left, therefore, deserves another chance and is in fact the only stake to play. Retort is surprisingly naive in these conclusions by refusing to answer whose blood stains the banner; it does not emphasize the Left's complicity in bloodshed-as-usual. Retort plays with Vaneigem's idea of "decompression" without crediting him, and clearly does not take the concept seriously.

There remain possibilities for ending our current set-up, escaping the deadly conflicts that rage while everything remains the same. These possibilities will demand a broad range of experimentation to discover. They exist because spectacular capitalism does not control everything that moves. This system is total and encompassing as a *system* only. One could argue about what Debord himself would have said on this point; he was not infallible. Retort seems to take one criticism that could be made of Debord and the Situationists, then adopt it as a justification for simultaneously paying homage to and trivializing their legacy. In response, some modern Debordists have responded with ire to AP. The critics propose that the US state literally put together the September 11 attacks. The critics' theory appears crude, mechanistic and gratuitous; the important point is the world-historical context of events, not specific arrangements between individuals and elites. It

could be argued, however, that Retort at times willfully ignores the big questions surrounding September 11. For example, a better book would have begun with the question "How can we even know what's going on in the world anymore?"

AP improves though. In the book's second chapter, the authors lay out an argument that they are aware shreds their opposition. Retort's targets are the

The problem here is that Retort treats their analytical break with Marxist orthodoxy as some sort of scandal, when in fact their observations are commonplace.

partisans of Blood For Oil theories regarding the occupation of Iraq, and also peak oil apocalypsis. Retort examines the theories of these groups, increasingly common within contestational circles, and then compares them to the reality of both oil politics and capitalism as a whole. Retort's argument is simple: oil politics are part of a capitalist world, and only make sense within this general context. Or, in Retort's words: "Oil's powers are drawn from a quite specific force field having a capitalist core that must periodically reconstitute the conditions of its own profitability." Retort agrees with such obvious statements as "Oil is running out.... The question is when," and then questions the supposedly common sense arguments derived from such banality: that US capitalism, needing oil, has been pushed into a new military adventure solely due to "the foul-smelling liquidity (and combustibility) of petroleum." The authors concede that our system produces determinants, and that oil may be such a determinant within a broader context. However, Blood For Oil theorists misrepresent the role of oil within modern capitalism; Retort notes, for example, that "the history of twentieth-century oil is not the history of shortfall and inflation, but of the constant menace—for the industry and the oil states—of excess capacity and falling prices, of surplus and glut." It then surveys this history up to the present moment. One important passage links oil politics since OPEC to "on the one hand... the *politicization* of the oil sector; on the



other, the *commercialization* of the arms industry." By the time Retort's account is complete, those who fixate on oil rather than seeing an attempt at "radical, punitive, 'extra-economic' restructuring of the conditions necessary for expanded profitability" in Iraq, alongside a capitalist "oil-arms-military-construction-finance-drugs nexus," are out for the count.

Retort spends another significant chapter on the relationship between the US and Israeli states. Here the book questions the degree to which Israel actually serves as a US "strategic asset," and especially moves in on the hypothesis that the "client Israeli tail truly wags the US dog." The history of US-Zionist relations is briefly treated over the course of a few pages. Retort states that "Israel did indeed come to serve, for more than a decade, as a US strategic asset" and contends that, "by the early 1980s... Israel's short-lived strategic effectiveness had come to an end." Israel receives support beyond its actual strategic worth because it remains attractive as a spectacle. In US society, Israel serves as an image of the market and democracy "making the desert bloom." The Israeli state is also "emblematic of hyper-militarized, crudely colonizing Western power" and its imperatives. Retort asks:

Can the US move into Iraq be understood as a delusional attempt to repeat the one-time "success" of the Israeli lodestar? Or, put another way, did the Iraq invasion follow from the (conscious or unconscious) recognition, finally, that Israel's time as a projection of the west—as an illusion—has come to an end?

These are indeed worthwhile questions. Retort's attempts to give provisional answers are only half-convincing, but they meaningfully add to important debates in the process. Their attempts to explain the hidden logic of political power need to be tempered with a degree of caution. Retort makes an interesting case for a decline of the "real" strategic importance of Israel to the US. Still, in a rapidly transforming geopolitical context, Israel may again prove to be of strategic import to US statecraft, rather than merely an insane liability. Likewise, even if it is mistaken to talk of any Wag the Dog scenario, it is essential to consider Israel as a powerful state. It is in the nature of states to try to manipulate each other no matter how cozy their relationship. And "the world's greatest superpower" is not immune to manipulation. This being stated, Retort is

correct to challenge the one theory worse than "Just follow the oil" explanations of our society: "Just follow the Zionists" (or, worse still, "Just follow the Jews.")

In between oil and Zionism, Retort discusses what it sees as our world's "atavism and new-fangledness." Here the authors centralize the theme of "primitive accumulation"—a term lifted straight from Marx, but reformulated in light of present circumstances. Marx, following a description of workers caught in the wage labor process, asks how this process came into being, what "original sin" took place to make matters so. Marx posited the model of "primitive accumulation," a development that "takes away from the laborer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage-laborers" (Marx, *Capital, Volume One*). To Marx, the enclosure of the commons and "the expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process." Marx calls such accumulation "primitive," as to him it formed "the prehistoric stage of capital and the mode of production corresponding with it."

Retort argues that the project of primitive accumulation is not a "prehistoric stage of capital," but rather continues to this day. Our system continually dispossesses.

Hence the periodic movement of capitalism outward, to geographies and polities it can plunder almost unopposed. (Or so it hoped, in the case of

Here as elsewhere, Retort's criticism of the Left is shallow—it questions form rather than content.

Iraq.) But hence, also, its drive *inward*, deep into the fabric of sociality, in search of resources to rip from the commons. How else, for example, to grasp the present reality of the patenting of life-forms? [emphasis in original]

What radical could argue with such observations? The problem here is that Retort treats their analytical break with Marxist orthodoxy as some sort of scandal, when in fact their observations are

commonplace. Anarchists and, since at least the 1970s, many anti-state communists have made precisely the same point, consistently and often with simpler language. The more interesting question is how such atavistic accumulation, constantly intruding into areas of life not yet optimally subsumed by capitalism, is bound up within a spectacular modernity that organizes society everywhere as if such subsumption is already complete. Capitalism, in every one of its "primitive" campaigns, reveals just how vulnerable it is. Yet in its spectacular aspect, it demonstrates the exact opposite—the durability and the total nature of capitalist normalcy. Retort comes close to grappling with this problem, but instead falls back into line behind "the banner soaked in blood." When Retort reaches the conclusion that, within modernity, primitive accumulation tends towards a military course, they devote an entire chapter to the bloody history of US militarism. The chapter contains only one substantial thought: that capitalist war is, surprisingly enough, related to capitalist peace. Still, such a chapter could be instructive for those believing that knowledge of history is optional for their practice. Two centuries of US conquest are discussed.

The world of capitalist war has its fronts. A particularly militant, and politically modern form of Islam now fights in the trenches. *AP* examines these warriors, contextualizing their actions in the same way the book earlier placed recent US actions against Afghanistan and Iraq into a broader narrative of slaughter.

Retort's sweeping yet concise narrative, tracing the historical, cultural and intellectual roots of Islamism, is useful reading. It is also marred by Retort's acceptance of Left/Right dichotomies and their unwillingness to speak of "decompression," how authoritarian conflicts in fact stabilize the world system.

Retort makes a slight criticism of the Left when they point out the relationship between "Islamist" vanguardism, and the vanguard politics typical of the Old and New Lefts. Here as elsewhere, Retort's criticism of the Left is shallow—it questions form rather than content. The vanguard form is actually a useful tool, but only to those who wish to use it for a particular goal: the reconfiguration of class society. When it comes to the political content of al-Qaida and their ilk, Retort stresses the warriors' position of intentional otherness, and

*continued on page 16*



# The Book That Launched a Thousand Translations

## ***Society of the Spectacle***

by Guy Debord  
translated by Ken Knabb  
(Rebel Press, London 2005)  
paper, 120 pages, \$15

Ken Knabb has devoted his life to the work of Guy Debord. An active post-Situationist since the early seventies, his editing and translation of *The Situationist International Anthology* has been the most important contribution to the Anglophone understanding of the SI till now. His translations of Guy's films are now in paperback and he has recently received the rights to translate all of Debord's work into English. The translations of the films were the first fruit of that responsibility but this new translation of *Society of the Spectacle* is the real golden apple.

If past translations of Debord's masterpiece have suffered, it is from either being too literal (as in the case of the Black and Red translation) or unnecessarily obscure (as in the case of the one from Zone). Knabb's translation is an American one meant for an American readership (although ironically Rebel Press is based in London while Zone Books is based in New York). It usually uses fewer words than Zone's, often making choices that are stripped of a subtlety that would evade and frustrate a first-time reader.

A few examples in detail:

### **Black & Red: 5**

The spectacle cannot be understood as an abuse of the world of vision, as a product of the techniques of mass dissemination of images. It is, rather, a *Weltanschauung* which has become actual, materially translated. It is a world vision which has become objectified.

### **Zone: 5**

The spectacle cannot be understood either as a deliberate distortion of the visual world or as

a product of the technology of the mass dissemination of images. It is far better viewed as a *Weltanschauung* that has been actualized, translated into the material realm—a world view transformed into an objective force.

### **Knabb: 5**

The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual deception produced by mass-media technologies. It is a world-view that has actually been materialized, a view of a world that has become objective.

Let's review these, as they demonstrate the kind of choices made generally. Knabb chose to translate the German term *Weltanschauung* which is unusual. Generally if the text you are translating uses terms from another language it is because of a choice that the author is making to be more precise than they are capable in their own language. To translate that term into a third language prioritizes readability over precision. "It is a world-view that has been materialized" is inarguably more readable than "It is far better viewed as a *Weltanschauung* that has been actualized," but the intent of the author seems obscured. Also, is there a substantive difference between something (in particular a worldview) being actualized and it being materialized? It seems as though one, to be pedantic, is a materialist project and the other is a process that isn't necessarily physical. Is becoming vegan a materialized worldview or an actualized one? Black and Red provide another twist: "It is, rather, a *Weltanschauung* which has become actual," providing a term that connotes neither motion (actualized), nor stasis (materialized), but truth.

Naturally the following sentence leavens the potential of widely different interpretations of this aphorism. "A view of a world that has become

Reviewed by Aragorn!



objective" connects some of the major themes of Debord's thought; the connection between sight, alienation from the world, and the capitalist system of objectification.

Another example:

### **Black & Red: 129**

Cyclical time in itself is time without conflict. But conflict is installed within this infancy of time: history first struggles to be history in the practical activity of masters. This history superficially creates the irreversible; its movement constitutes precisely the time it uses up within the interior of the inexhaustible time of cyclical society.

*continued on next page*



### Afflicted Powers review continued from page 15

hostility, towards Western development and secularism. They write pages on the simultaneously "revolutionary" and abhorrent program of political Islam. One line expresses Retort's position sufficiently: "We are witnessing a real resistance to Empire." What is crucial, however, is the *sameness* of Islamism to the western free market, its Left, and every other facet of the world that capitalist production built. Islamism is essentially counter-revolutionary. It is fast positioning itself as the indispen-

**Retort, however, flounders when identifying what is worthwhile in radicalism.**

able enemy of global north rulers. This is why it will not quickly be defeated or go away, without mass subversive action.

Overall, Retort's book is too shallow to be a useful guide for those determined to transform our world. *AP* draws to a

close with some meandering thoughts on modernity, coupled with minor suggestions on how change may occur. What was weak within Retort's diagnosis casts doubts upon their prescriptions. Retort knows the most obvious flaws of modern radicalism. They indirectly make use of this understanding when they contrast ideologies of "going back" to a reappropriation of the present. Retort, however, flounders when it comes to identifying what is worthwhile in radicalism. Ultimately, they can no longer see where there is hope for deep, international transformation. Toward the end of *AP*, the authors refer to "Bush Senior's betrayal of the Shi'ite uprising against Saddam in 1991," yet this uprising was not exclu-

sively Shi'ite. In practice, the rebellion opposed Bush's New World Order as much as it did Saddam. "Betrayal" is a poor description of its fate. While the '91 *shura* (council) rebellion burned, Iraqi personnel deserted from the military,

mowed down the old commanders, set fire to police stations and held gatherings to continue the struggle. They are not cited by Retort as an example of strong revolt (despite the uprising's ultimate suppression). Instead, Retort suggests that we who failed to stop the '03 invasion of Iraq now concentrate on vague efforts against "bases" and "secrecy." Certainly, Retort could make objections to "unrealistic" calls for open mutiny, and the violence implicit in such anti-citizen calls. Arguing for such deeds abstractly does have a facile and juvenile ring to it. The mere *image* of such acts is easily integrated within the spectacle. Yet millions will have to fight back just as fiercely as the *shura* rebels if there is to be any hope for a different life, without the ugly existence of states, capitalist production and the spectacle. The question is how this can happen. For all of its good points, *AP* does not answer convincingly. It is a book of excuses, at a time when our affliction is too serious for half-measures. Its readers do not have to echo these excuses.

### Society of the Spectacle review continued from page 17

**It usually uses fewer words than Zone's, often making choices that are stripped of a subtlety that would evade and frustrate a first-time reader.**

Zone: 129

In its essence, cyclical time was a time without conflict. Yet even in this infancy of time, conflict was present: at first, history struggled to become history through the practical activity of the masters. At a superficial level this history created irreversibility; its movement constituted the very time that it used up *within* the inexhaustible time of cyclical society.

Knabb: 129

In itself, cyclical time is a time without conflict. But conflict is already present even in this infancy of time, as history first struggles to become

history in the practical activity of the masters. This history creates a surface irreversibility; its movement constitutes the very time it uses up within the inexhaustible time of cyclical society.

The last sentence of these translations should remind the reader of the Hegelian contortions of Marx and Debord. These three translations read quite differently as a result. Black and Red reads that "history superficially creates the irreversible," Zone that "At a superficial level this history created irreversibility," and Knabb that "This history creates a surface irreversibility." These may seem like a quibble but it is a very different statement to talk about history creating superficial irreversibility or that at a superficial level history created irreversibility. These nuances thread through the

entirety of a side-by-side reading of the Knabb and (especially) the Zone translation. Sometimes the differences are easily identifiable as being about readability and at other times they seem to choose sides in arguments that are obscure and lost in time, but interesting to Debord scholars and persistent readers of the increasing body of English translations of the Situationist International.

Guy's articulation of our separated world, of our "spectacular" reality, remains the truest theoretical statement of the time we live in and how things ended up this way. Knabb's translation now sits as the most approachable way to discover Guy Debord, the Situationists, and the body of thought that has relied on this text, including those of the post-Situationists, Primitivists, many anti-state communists, and post-left anarchists.



# All Beginnings Should Be So Good...

Reviewed by Aragorn!

**Only a Beginning:  
An Anarchist Anthology**  
edited by Allan Antliff  
(Arsenal Pulp Press  
Vancouver, 2004)  
paper, 406 pages, \$24.95

The only disappointing thing about *Only a Beginning* is how few people are ever going to own a copy. Blame American parochialism, but as an anthology of Canadian anarchism over the past 30 years, it wouldn't matter how black the bloc on the cover or how direct the action inside, it just isn't going to move in the States. The shame of this is that not only are some of the most intelligent discussions that have happened in North America over that 30 year period represented in this anthology, but also those aspects of anarchist thought that clearly represent the break from the historical anarchism of the Nineteenth Century to an anarchy after leftism.

Antliff has made interesting decisions in the presentation. This is a coffee table book that respectfully represents a great number of its selections as facsimiles of the original magazine and zine pages. This gives the book, which is physically quite weighty, a light and less academic feel than it would have been as just a selection of reprints.

The decision to present the material by theme rather than more linearly was inspired. History, Issues and Actions, Theory and Practice, Debates, Art, Autonomous Zones, and a section on Zines and the Alternative Press provide a structure that is more compelling to someone new to the specific material being explored than

trudging through the life and times of each publication, group, or influential individual. This is not necessarily a book to read from front to back but by section, page, and segment.

The breadth of the Canadian anarchist movement isn't to be underrated. The clearly abolitionist prison perspective of projects like *Bulldozer*, the militant feminism of *Bevy of Anarcha-feminists (BOA)* and the radical

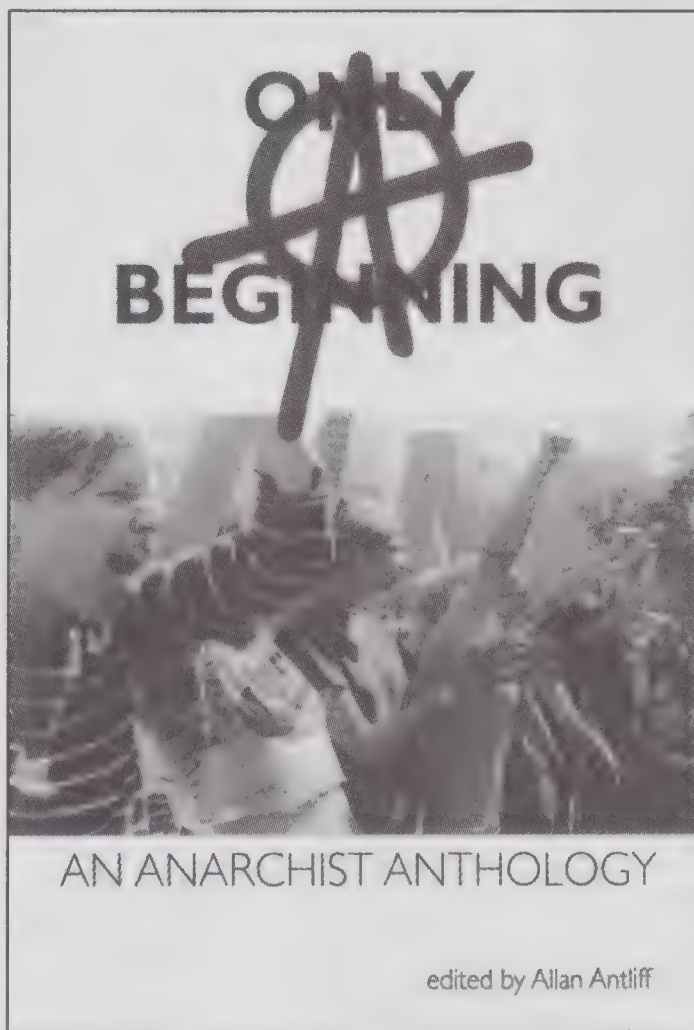
our contemporary classical anarchists would have it, did these new priorities and approaches lose sight of the anarchist tradition from which they originated. Of particular note within these pages is a great image of two women in embrace and the cut-and-paste text of an appropriate Voltairine de Cleyre quote: "I say right here candidly that

as a class I have nothing to hope from men... hope lies in creating rebellion in the breasts of women" from *BOA*. Another excellent piece is a sequence of cartoons from *Anarchy Comics* by way of *Endless Struggle* with the text from Proudhon's excellent diatribe against government: "What is government? Whoever lays their hand on me, Government is slavery, etc, etc."

There are also great pieces of Canadian anarchist history here. An interview and much coverage of the Vancouver 5, the Mohawk struggle at Oka, or Quebec April 2001, as well as more critical and engaged coverage of US events than that provided by the American anarchist press (including analysis of September 11th, Big Mountain, and the first Gulf War).

This is a definitive history of more than just the anarchists from north of the border but of the way that anarchism has greatly broadened since the decline of the New Left. *Only a Beginning* gives us a valuable and insightful view of anarchist thinking on feminism, indig-

enous issues and struggles, and the changing anarchist discourse around ecology, nationalism, and militant action. Recommended.

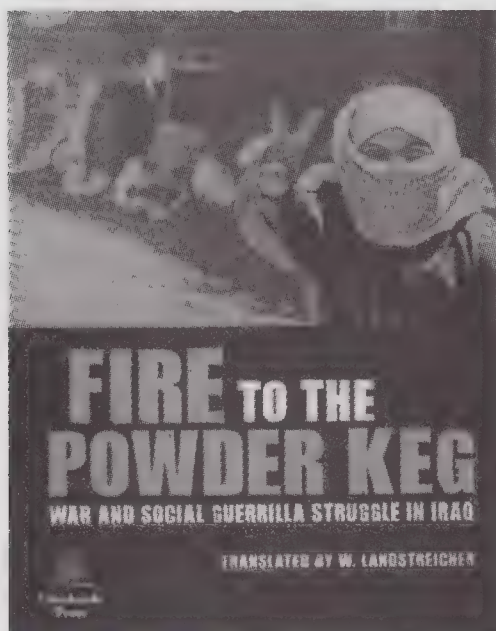


ecological perspective of *Reality Now* and *Open Road* have instigated the shape of discussions and writing about these topics today. Never, as many of



# Confusion over Simplified

Reviewed by Rob los Ricos



**Fire to the Powder Keg: War and Social Guerrilla Struggle in Iraq** by Fuoso alle Polveri and "Porfido" translated by Wolfi Landstreicher (Eberhardt Press, Portland OR, 2005) paper, 116 pages \$6

Events in the formative years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have become obviously, psychotically, blatantly twisted. The most wretched land on earth—the radioactive, petrochemically poisoned wasteland dubbed Iraq by the British mapmakers who divvied up the former Ottoman Empire after WWI—has become some sort of reflective kaleidoscope, an ideological Rorschach blot, a land stained with oil and blood, scorched by the sun. Iraq has become a place for demagogues to look for confirmation of whatever creed has imprisoned their minds and hearts—be they end-times zealot crusaders, Islamo-fundamentalists or free market neo-conmen.

At least the United Nations had the decency to back away from the

Iraqi powder keg. After overseeing a decade-long campaign of genocide against the Iraqi people, the UN found itself unwelcomed and unloved in occupied Iraq, their headquarters the target of one of the most devastating car bombings on record. Should the UN and their global supporters admit their failure to prevent such atrocities from recurring ("never again" being the slogan used to rally support for its conception after the war against fascism), perhaps the healing could begin. But that's too much to hope for, because the UN doesn't even see the 4-6 million deaths it caused when it looks at Iraq. As with all true believers, the UN fundamentalists only see evidence of their efforts.

Likewise, the Bush Junta is only capable of viewing the ruined nation through its faith-based information-gathering techniques. The weapons of mass destruction are there, you just have to *believe!* And—honestly—there is no evidence to link Saddam Hussein to Osama bin-Laden's terrorist network, yet the Bush Junta *knows* they are there, as they announced to the stunned, frightened public on September 12, 2001, having spent the previous day flying El Presidente around the country in a desperate effort to find a copy of *My Pet Goat* for GW, as he was hustled out of Florida before having a chance to finish reading it.

Feeling left out of world affairs since the failure of the Soviet Union, Marxists and other workerists in Italy have leapt at the opportunity to interpret the chaos in Iraq according to their own belief system.

*Fire to the Powder Keg* is a compilation of anarchist and anti-state communists originally published in Italy between February and March of '04, translated and compiled into this book in '05.

It is tempting to write a point-by-point refutation of the many leaps of faith and acts of deliberate self-delusion the authors utilize in order to try to force the Iraqi wars of liberation and its civil war into their class war ideology. A more interesting discussion would be why anyone would think this was a project worthy of undertaking.

The original authors were working under conditions very disadvantageous for the type of analysis they attempted, having never been to Iraq, and apparently unable to locate many Iraqi expatriates or scholars to help them out.

And admittedly, the civil war had scarcely begun when these pieces were written and it was difficult to obtain any sort of information on what was happening in Iraq. As much as I try to keep up with how things are going in Iraq, there are more questions than answers to be found in the misinformation spewed forth by embedded propagandists or from journalists fearful of venturing forth from their hotel rooms. Still, by paying attention and piecing together bits of information scattered about by various mainstream and lefty-liberal sources, one can get a sense of the larger view, without having to resort to trying to force selected items into a limited, fanciful credo. Such rigidity is best left to governments and their lackeys, as it tends to give propaganda a bad reputation.

There are certainly things happening that are not being reported, including movements and actions of organized workers. But to claim this is the focal point of a singular conflict—that the workers of Iraq should rise up and drive out the unwanted US-led occupation forces and create a secular society—isn't just a misunderstanding of what's happening there, it has no basis in reality.

As an Iraqi state is forcibly coaxed into existence amidst the chaos raging

*continued on page 22*



# Refusing to Sit Still

Reviewed by Skyler

## ***That's Revolting: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation***

Edited by Mattilda  
aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore  
(Soft Skull Press, Brooklyn, 2004)  
paper, 320 pages, 16.95

*That's Revolting* refuses to sit still. Mattilda's most recent literary endeavor is an anthology of queer activist writings. It consists of personal histories, political rants, and conversations. Contributors, some who hail from New York, Philadelphia, but mostly from the Bay Area, include early gay liberation activists, whores, freaks, counterculture artists, activist academics, and some understated anarchists. Some of these strategies may read less like CrimethInc.'s "Recipes" and more like sociological reports laced with politically emotional minefields, but the book does include some empowering and original writing.

Touching on the topics of racism, misogyny, classism, ageism, xenophobia, ableism, transphobia, and heterosexism *That's Revolting* does not succumb to essentialism (the reduction of identity to a single category). While identity politics play a role in the discussion of assimilation, the authors exhibit a much more complex understanding than one limited by single issue identification. Many authors even identify with straights who challenge the status quo. However, the book's greatest strength is also one of its most annoying aspects; the laundry list of oppression. That list wouldn't be quite so annoying if it weren't repeated so often, almost as if the right order of "anti-isms" will get some writers through the speakeasy door of solidarity.

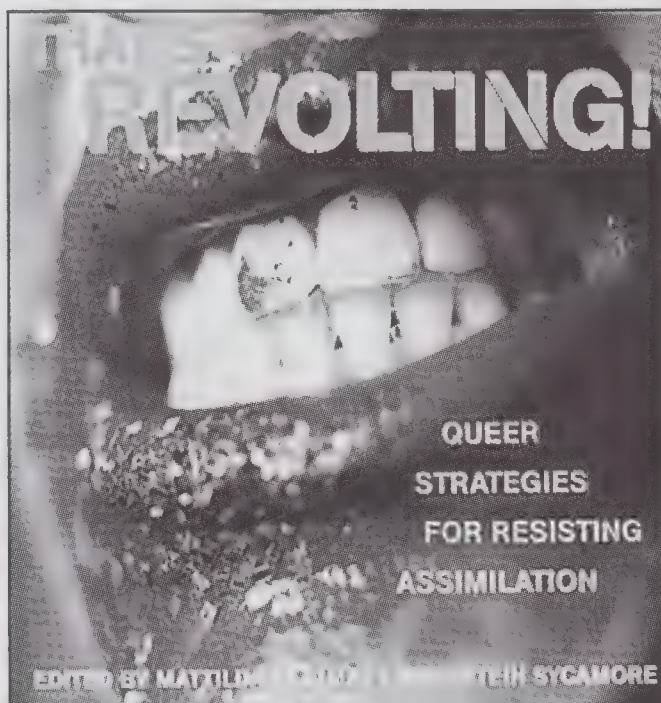
The book fires out the gate with a piece called "Dr. Laura, Sit On My Face." This piece pines for the

days when Dr. Laura struck fear into the hearts of mainstream nuclear families about queers and sexual liberation. How much easier is it to feel alive and dangerous when your lifestyle is considered scandalous and the end of civilization?

We're out to create a world where lovers can cut, brand, fist, bleed, shit, piss on each other, love each other our very own way, and do all the terrible things I know you are thinking of, Dr. Laura, and getting wet as you imagine them... Dr. Laura... remind them that I am part of a sexual revolution designed to deconstruct the social state as we know it..." (10)

This piece sets a campy tone for the rest of the book, encouraging a humorous or non-serious method of dealing with serious issues as a useful tool against assimilation. This method reflects back strongly on early gay liberationists, especially of the Stonewall generation.

The most personally engaging contribution, "Choice Cuts," deals with sexuality and gender identity as choice or free will rather than essence. Why is this a damning approach to the mainstream LGBT movement? Because it destroys the assumption that given the choice, everyone would choose to be straight. "We're just built



this way" doesn't challenge shit. This analysis also debunks the myth that queers and non-queers are somehow biologically different. The author attacks the conformity of so-called alternative lifestyles exhibited by yuppies, hipsters, and denizens of the Castro. It explains an accountability for our identities, a position or value to defend if necessary, while resisting societal pressure to claim victimhood. It challenges the response that queerness should follow the path of an inborn trait like ethnicity, or that we should only ask for tolerance. "Tolerance is conditional and subject to revocation. Freedom of choice is absolute" (pg. 63).

Possibly the best personal account, "Inside the Box" is written by a queer prisoner. The juxtaposition of literal and metaphorical cages is intriguing. Fluid sexuality can slide between bars,



but even fluidity will have to resist something at some point. Homo-sex in prison is dominated by tops (who

*A closer look at assimilation within this book reveals erasure, homogenization, and just plain consumption.*

claim they aren't gay) and bottoms; a binary otherwise known as

the exchange of one's own autonomy, whatever it is, however alien or un-trendy or out of vogue one's own self is, for some easy-to-assume, prepackaged iconology... It's our minds, taught to compartmentalize, to assign, to define... I have my individuality. I have a heart that beats within this cage. I have a sexuality that rebels, that seduces, that dances in circles." (140)

A closer look at assimilation within this book reveals erasure, homogenization, and just plain consumption. Some of the personal accounts are the most interesting angles from which to view assimilation. A queer of color documents her dual cyber personas in a gay chatroom, one black as herself and one as white; what happens is troubling. Another piece by a post-operative intersex person articulates the incredibly complicated situation of being intersex in a world that believes that all humans must possess *either* male or female sex organs, and the emotional loss of having the shape of your sex organs chosen for you by doctors at an early age. The author struggles to recall the details surrounding the surgeries that attempted to form her genitalia into something recognizable and functional as female. If there is a message here it's this: "...oppression can only inflict damage to the extent that I willfully choose to internalize the oppressive ideology" (pg. 166).

Mattilda writes the most interesting political history contribution — about the San Francisco-based group Gay Shame. This chronology is an excellent resource for any direct action affinity group. Using confrontational tactics spiked with humor, Gay Shame offers

a complex practice of resistance to assimilation. Mattilda's account points out clearly the spectacle of activism, both critiquing and embracing it. In tackling assimilation—racism, anti-homelessness, gentrification, imperialism, marriage, and capitalism—Gay Shame shares with anarchists the values of direct action, autonomy, non-hierarchical organizing, and hatred of cops.

A lot of space in the book is given to activist groups such as the now-disbanded Fed Up Queers (FUQ), the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, FIERCE, and of course Gay Shame. Anarchists will read some these short histories and take issue with the liberal, progressive program. But before totally writing off those articles, consider a contribution from a Philly transsexual called "Stayin' Alive: Trans Survival and Struggle on the Streets of Philadelphia." Many of us are still able to navigate a liberal society; we are able to obtain real jobs when needed, gain access to health care, and otherwise mostly able to pass below the radar of mainstream society.

Completely excluded from the wage economy through job discrimination and poverty, many of the city's poor trans people and trans people of color are left with few options but sex work to make ends meet. Excluded from homeless shelters, brutalized by police, unjustly held in prison, and faced with high rates of HIV and (Hepatitis) C, trans people have had to rely on each other for survival. (279)

Trans-people have organized informal systems of mutual aid, completely out of necessity. And if these communities of mutual aid choose to organize for social services like health care and housing, am I supposed to oppose that? Philly trans-people even solicited support of the mainstream gay groups. Longer chains are still chains, yes, but what if they are choking you? Unfortunately, instead of taking this revolutionary point of view to the total transformation of all aspects of life, the author of "Stayin' Alive" chooses

to rant against us foreign policy and how it effects trans-people, and even claims victory when the state and police decide to investigate the murder of a transsexual, as if somehow respect from authority validates life. I would have much rather read about the way that mutual aid has worked for these people, what challenges they met together, and what shortcomings they may have exposed within themselves.

Finally, contributions about autonomous space occasionally grace these pages. Many of the proposed autonomous zones are playgrounds for cruising and sex work. The Manhattan West Side Piers and the West Village were areas where homeless queers, sex workers, queer youth of color and deviants could hang out without (much) harassment, although this didn't last long before there was constant police presence. However, when faced with the prospects of being kicked out of those neighborhoods by Mayor Giuliani's "Quality of Life" campaign, they organized a rally and petitioned city officials, instead of organizing a riot. You can guess what happened to that petition. It is notable that it was mostly queer youth of color organizing themselves. These histories are always more interesting when they steer towards the personal and avoid the liberal politics.

In short, I was turned off by some of the liberal, *uber-serious* or self-congratulatory political rantings. However, I'm not sure another anthology exists out there quite like this. Many contributions are uncomfortable to read, sometimes they may just be new ways of repackaging old decoys. But *That's Revolting* is not monolithic. Not everything is relevant to an anarchist discussion, but some of it will provoke and challenge you. There is value to be gleaned from its pages, especially the humor and playful tone—something most anarchist writers haven't figured out how to do yet. Although one queer anarchist writer gets it when writing about protesting a Gay Pride event: "The dollar makes me dry but anarchy gets me wet."



# An Angry Stuart Christie & The Angry Brigade

Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

***The Christie File: Part 3, 1967-1975; Edward Heath Made Me ANGRY***  
by Stuart Christie  
(Christie Books, East Sussex, 2004)  
paper, 308 pages, £40

***The Angry Brigade: A History of Britain's First Urban Guerilla Group***  
by Gordon Carr  
(Christie Books, East Sussex, 2003)  
paper, 151 pages, £30

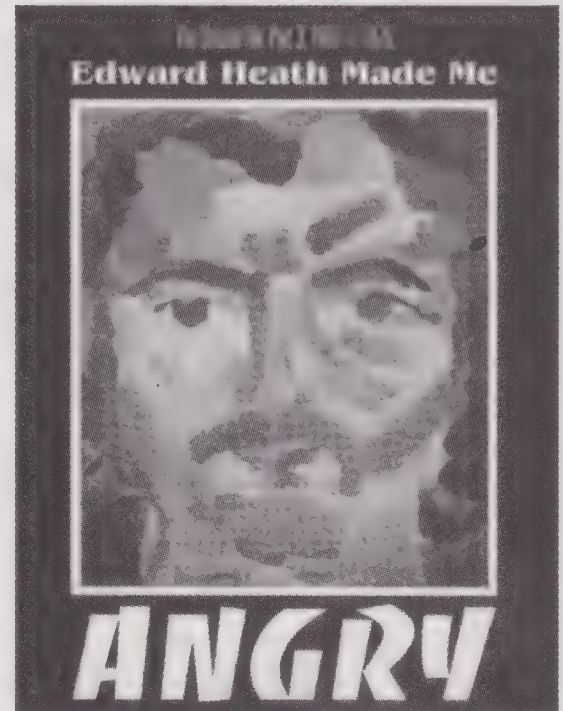
For anyone with a passing knowledge of British radical/anarchist history, last year's bombings in London of course bring to mind the actions of the Angry Brigade, a loose organization of militants coming out of working class, student, and poor people's movements of the Sixties. The differences, however, are enormous.

The attacks in London were meant to invoke the bombings in New York and Madrid in the past five years; the suspects are the same. In all of these cases, however, there are suspicions that all is not as it first appears. The quick discovery of Islamist texts at the bomb sites (or at nearby caches) seems too convenient. Some will be reminded of the bombings in Rome and Milan in 1969 that resulted in mass killings, having targeted people indiscriminately (and which subsequently were shown to have been the work of the Italian state as part of its Strategy of Tension, the goal of which was a right-wing/military take-over). Whether al-Qaeda or the British (or American, or Israeli or whichever country's) secret services are ultimately responsible for murdering London commuters this past July, the beneficiaries of this latest outrage are clearly the repressive apparatus functionaries of the British state, and by extension, all other cops in all other states.

The justifications for murdering non-combatants are always the same: either the liberation or defense

of some oppressed group of people or a particular state. The same authoritarian argument was made for the bombings carried out by NATO in the former Yugoslavia, the US/UK military in Iraq, or the Israeli military in Gaza. So whether some shadowy Islamist outfit or elements of some state's intelligence service (or a combination) is behind those attacks, the result is the same: people who don't question the existence of the state clamoring for the state to protect them better—which of course it can never do, despite that being one of the main excuses for the state to exist. The kind of fear generated through the use of indiscriminate violence is meant for those people, and the authoritarians and cops who use it know that; it is precisely the point.

In stark contrast, the targets of the Angry Brigade were inanimate and symbolic, and directly connected to the oppressive aspects of the state; average people knew they weren't the targets. Angry Brigade-claimed actions occurred from December 1970-August 1972 and were inspired by, and partially undertaken in solidarity with, the First of May Group, an anarchist resistance organization dedicated to reminding the international public of the continued repressive nature of the Franco regime. Targets of the First of May Group included Spanish banks all over Europe, the US Embassy in London, Spanish tourism offices, and Spanish politicians. Angry Brigade targets included police stations, an army barracks, government buildings, and the homes of British bureaucrats and politicians. Nobody was seriously injured or killed by



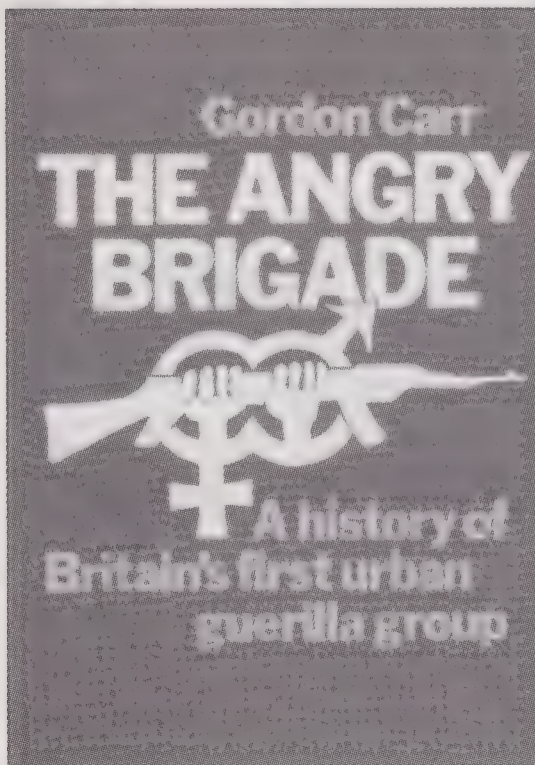
members of either group.

Christie writes about the clear differences between the kinds of activities engaged in by the Angry Brigade versus others who use random violence:

The only groups consistently using coercion, violence, weapons and explosives to impose their will or as a form of political argument are those allied to a government or other forms of power or authority structure. (p. 249)

Both of these books serve to remind radicals of a different time and different strategies, a time before the authoritarians of the New Left appropriated the tactics of the libertarians (shooting at and bombing property), armed themselves, became clandestine, and degenerated into perpetrating vengeful actions against individuals and groups of people deemed "the enemy." This unfortunate trajectory





cause they were released by the same publisher. Carr's book is an objective but clearly sympathetic examination of the cluster of individuals who eventually took the name of the Angry Brigade, the first urban guerrilla group to appear in England, while Christie continues with his autobiography (see reviews of Volumes One and Two in *Anarchy* #58). Incidentally, Scribner's has just released a condensed version in one volume, which runs to a still-generous 423 pages.

Carr, who also produced a BBC documentary about the Angry Brigade (which is now available from [www.Christie-Books.com](http://www.Christie-Books.com)), had lots of access to police personnel and material as well as the milieu from which the Brigade came, making his history the most comprehensive to date (it was originally published in 1975). He not only covers the attacks claimed

by the Angry Brigade as well as the arrests and trials of the suspects; he also provides a brief but densely packed sociopolitical context. With introductions by two of the eventual eight defendants (Christie and John Barker, the latter convicted and the former acquitted), a better book on the subject has yet to be printed. In-

cidentally, Barker also gets a sort of last word: the Postscript is Barker's review of Tom Vague's *Anarchy in the UK: The Angry Brigade*, a sensationalist and misleading study of the Angry Brigade published by AK Press a few years back.

Volume Three of Christie's autobiography continues his examination of his own life experiences within the social context of England from 1967-1975. These are the heady years of the New Left, the hippy counter-culture, the anti-Vietnam War movement, and Third World liberation struggles. It's all here, in the usually entertaining Christie prose.

What was it like being an ex-con from a Spanish prison thrown into a political mixture of never-arrested activists? What was it like being an anarchist in a context of increasingly popular (non-Soviet) Marxism? What was it like to be the subject of intense police surveillance? What was it like to be framed by the cops and have to endure the longest criminal trial in British history? Christie answers all those questions, providing a compelling and intimate overview of those years. In keeping with the format of the previous two volumes a timeline of international events is included as an appendix, providing a broader context for what he calls "The Angry Decade" of 1966-1975.

is something to consider, especially in light of how various state agencies were able to infiltrate those groups and help divert the supposedly lofty humanitarian goals of those using armed struggle tactics into sustained campaigns of brutality.

These two books deserve to be read in conjunction; and it's not just be-

## Fire to the Powder Keg *review continued from page 18*

across the land, it's becoming easier to discern many of the factions vying for power. Though the media tries to portray this with simplified generalities, the Iraqi wars are amazingly complex, the fighting takes place within a multitude of conflicts. In addition to the war against the occupation, there are the struggles for Kurdish and Shia autonomy, the opportunistic swindlers, the *jihads* to establish a Shi'ite state similar to Iran's as well as a *jihads* by foreign Arabs to prevent this, and efforts by the Ba'athist party to re-constitute itself.

Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Shia and Sunnis all collaborate or negotiate with the occupational government in or-

der to infiltrate the military and police forces and plunder the relentless avalanche of developmental monies funneled through Iraq.

Trying to portray these conflicts exclusively as a class war can only make sense to people who have never met a human being, but instead only see workers. The inability of Marxists and their kindred to acknowledge the importance in most people's lives of other aspects to human beings is their greatest shortcoming and proves

The authors try to force the Iraqi wars of liberation and its civil war into their class war ideology.

conclusively that Marxism, like all ideologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is a bloated, rotting corpse in desperate need of burial.



# I am Good and This World is Bad

## ***I Am Not A Man, I Am Dynamite!* Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition**

edited by John Moore and  
Spencer Sunshine  
(Autonomedia, NY 2004)  
paper, 150 pages, \$14.95

This long awaited anthology published by Autonomedia (known for their idiosyncratic scheduling and publishing of advertised titles), presents us with 12 essays from a variety of authors. With any book on Nietzsche, even more than with other authors, the two essential aspects that one must keep in mind are aesthetics and content... in that order of course. This book, while offering a clever cover and interesting content, doesn't provide the level of style that Nietzsche deserves. Many of the essays seemed insufficiently passionate. The few that did try to compose their pieces aesthetically came out like abortions. Here I note the mangled fetus of Franco Riccio's "The Death of God." Composed of a series of notes in a Deleuze-influenced style, it might be understandable if one is on an acid trip or is a boring Italian academic. The other essay that tries much too hard in the realm of style is Max Cafard's "Nietzschean Anarchy and the Post-Mortem Condition." This surrealist piece has interesting comments on how Nietzsche is used by many post-modernists, but suffers from Cafard's tendency to make up new vocabulary for the aspiring *ubermensch*.

### *Becoming who we are*

Allan Antliff's article "A Revolutionary Seer for a Post-Industrial Age" gains one's interest based on its interpretation of Ananda Coomaraswamy's Nietzschean style. The article recounts Coomaraswamy's biography in short order and touches upon his ideas on (re)claiming Indian

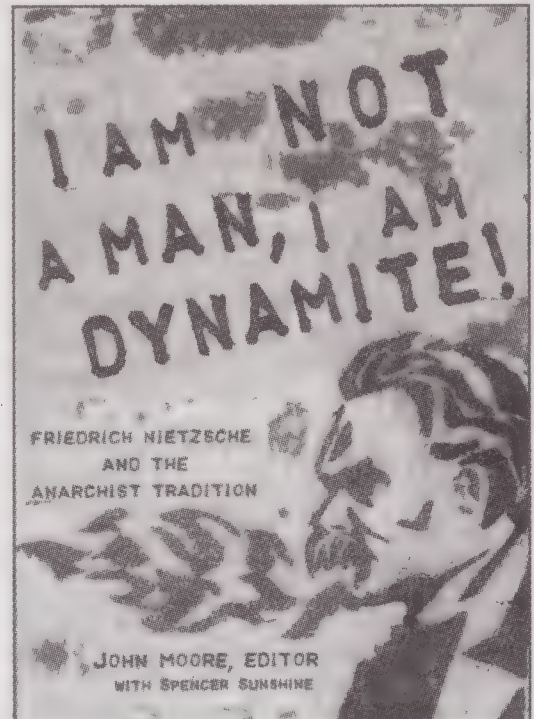
*swaraj* (self-rule), *swadeshi* (indigenouness), and his call for a revival of Indian arts, culture, and spiritual idealism. Antliff takes this as an attempt to create a post-industrialist situation: "To speak of post-industrialism was to assert [Coomaraswamy's] anti-industrial, anti-capitalist alternative as an immanent form of modernity not only in competition with European industrial capitalism, but destined to supersede it." (44) Antliff further argues that Coomaraswamy's "spiritual revolt against colonialism in the East was being augmented by the rise of Nietzschean Anarchism in the West." (44) Ultimately Antliff points to the rejection of modernity in favor of Coomaraswamy's Nietzschean "renunciating ethos," which would resolve social conflict in favor of "the bestowing virtue of the superman," inseparable from Coomaraswamy's post-industrial economic order. This was an eminently anarchist project in which "individualism flourished under an equitable social order that was ecological to the core." (46)

*"Thou goest to women?  
Do not forget thy whip!"*

Leigh Starcross in "Nietzsche Was an Anarchist" explores the themes in Emma Goldman's series of lectures on Nietzsche (from 1913 to 1917). We can only hope that more on these lectures is uncovered by our friends at the Emma Goldman Papers. While this article adequately describes Goldman's integration of Nietzsche's philosophy with anarcho-communism, it lacks the fire and fury of Red Emma's own words.

Goldman's relationship to Nietzsche is worth noting on various counts. First she was very much a

Reviewed by Clayton James



classical anarchist, following in the footsteps of people like Bakunin and Kropotkin. Those authors were mired in modernity and the enlightenment, something that anyone with even a cursory understanding of Nietzsche knows he rejects. Goldman showed she understood this when she broke with lover Edward Brady after he disparaged Nietzsche. "I pointed out that Nietzsche was not a social theorist but a poet, a rebel and innovator. His aristocracy was neither of birth nor of purse; it was of the spirit. In that respect Nietzsche was an anarchist, and all true anarchists were aristocrats, I said." (*Living My Life*, p. 193-194) Brady then said that Nietzsche was a "fool with a diseased mind," and so Goldman in a fury told him "You're rooted in the old. Very well remain there! But don't imagine



that you will hold me to it... I'll free myself even if it means tearing out your heart." (LML p.195)

Additionally, during the time Goldman lectured on him Nietzsche wasn't popular except with intellectuals and artists. While the characterization of him as a Nazi was in the future, she still had to explain him to people who misread his idea of the *ubermensch*.

Perhaps what is most interesting is that she was a Nietzschean woman, something unheard of in those days and uncommon in ours. She even used Nietzsche's famous whip line in her "Woman Suffrage" essay. Goldman extends the maxim that epitomizes women's slavish attitude towards their god, describing women as creatures of fetishes to which they submit.

Nietzsche's reputed misogyny is often written off these days as a psychological quirk. After all his sister was a Nazi, his mother tyrannical, all the formative women in his life were authoritarian, (not to mention his failed attempts at marriage, twice denied). Other times it is simply noted that he was a man of his times and succumbed to the usual sexism of the days. Yet Nietzsche's depiction of "woman" is complex and neither clearly misogynistic nor clearly not. Whether due to rumors or to superficial readings, one is easily convinced that he is in stalwart opposition to

in his pronouncement, "God is dead!" not only refutes God as *the* all-encompassing totality through which we must live but also all the monsters that masquerade as God/Truth in the caves in which the ape-man dwells. This announcement strikes a powerful blow against the western philosophical system that relies on essentialist truths.

"Dionysian Politics" addresses political structures as a result of Apollonian will.

The Apollonian is an aesthetic will to construct an illusion, a fantasy, that brings beauty and order. Through the construction of an image we interpret our place and activities in relation to the world. (51)

Interpretations require language, which is an expression of power... From Nietzsche's perspective, language sets the parameters for that which can be conceptualized. We think in the form that language provides for us. ...As images and impressions are turned into concepts, they allow for the construction of pyramidal structures, laws, subordination and boundaries, all of which appear to us as more stable than the uniqueness of each impression. Nietzsche refers to the product of this process using the metaphor of a "prison" ... In contrast to the transcendental tradition in Western epistemology going back to Plato, Nietzsche argues that knowledge is created not discovered. All knowledge is a human construction. (53)

What is interesting in this argument is the subject as a creation. The subject as an invention means that Free Will is also a concoction of Western thought. According to Nietzsche there is no Free Will, there are only strong and weak wills. The idea of the Free Will allows a way of life which is composed of rewards and punishments, by creating an idea that makes people responsible for their actions the Christian priests (the church) in the first transvaluation

of values poisoned life and not only legitimized itself via the act of judgment but also extended itself control through the ability to punish. We begin to see Nietzsche's attack on the state here which parallels an attack on church power.

Koch then goes on to point out the tension created between the complementary Dionysian and Apollonian (the creative, intuitive will that is in constant battle with the Apollonian will of rationality). What the Apollonian creates the Dionysian must destroy. Nietzsche claims we need a new human being (the *ubermensch*, the overman), one who overcomes, who understands that mankind has no special mission, no final purpose and who understands the world beyond moral constructs, that is beyond good and evil.

What Riccio and Vaccaro add to the discussion is little and arbitrary, in that order. Riccio's discussion on the death of God suffers from a lack of coherence, as noted in the opening paragraph: he does, however, exemplify not only a certain style of writing but also a style of thought which comes out of Nietzschean-influenced academia. Heavily supported by Deleuze in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, the main exploration of Riccio's essay is the varied meanings behind Nietzsche's announcement that god is dead. An interesting subject inadequately approached by a bad writer... or maybe it's the translation?

Vaccaro's article points to the arbitrariness of life, a perspective that is critically important to understanding Nietzsche. Without truth, with an underlining arbitrariness to life we find the *horror vacui*. The *horror vacui* is a strategy of containing the will to live. By creating a terror, and exaggerating the bleak emptiness of life this construction says "No!" to life when we should say "Yes!" It promotes passivity and spectatorship rather than recognizing that the arbitrary nature of life makes a condition in which we can create new values, and say yes to our lives. This is the idea behind the eternal return. Nietzsche's measuring stick of a life's value is based on how much exuberance one can put into living, as if one had to live the same life over and over, and over again in the same exact style.

*[Nietzsche's] aristocracy was neither of birth nor of purse; it was of the spirit. In that respect Nietzsche was an anarchist.*

*-Emma Goldman*

women. So it's interesting that Goldman takes him up and even uses his statements in a way to empower her own position, something that Nietzsche would surely enjoy. The whipping quote is also reminiscent of a certain infamous interaction between Goldman and Johann Most.

*God is Dead!*

Andrew Koch's "Dionysian Politics," Franco Riccio's "The Death of God," and Salvo Vaccaro's "Horro Vacui" all deal with the topic of truth. Nietzsche



*The teacher speaks:  
a didactic tone!*

Saul Newman's "Anarchism and the Politics of Ressentiment" strikes immediately against the foundational reasoning of many anarchists. This is an especially important idea that runs throughout the book so a short note is in order. *Ressentiment*, the spirit of revenge, could be summed up in a simple statement; the world is bad therefore I am good, a statement that smacks of essentialism, amongst other foul tastes. This oppositional view of the world sets up for the individual a defensive position, an identity politic in which one is against the world, a reactionary spirit. *Ressentiment* is characterized by an orientation outside of oneself; one does not make values, judgments, or engage in actions but rather reacts to the world. Nietzsche's view of the master/slave relation exists definitively outside of the brackets of the traditional anarchist view of master = power over slave, slave = disempowered due to master. Nietzsche views the master as one who creates their own set of values. The master says in a simple statement; I am good and as an afterward this world is bad, base. We live in a world in which the slaves have instilled a mass morality, a mass system of values according to their mass benefit. There are obvious parallels to many anarchist visions of an uprising: the poor and downtrodden working class overthrow the bourgeoisie (that is not to say that the bourgeoisie are creating their own set of values or are in any way masters in the Nietzschean sense) only to instill a utilitarian mass morality, mutual aid, communality, et cetera. Obviously this perspective means to benefit us all but it is still a reactive stance. To ultimately gain better ground we must begin to create our own systems of value, and these sets of values will not only vary widely from person to person but from community to community, which in a longer essay I might point out as being one of Nietzsche's greatest strengths and one of his greatest challenges... but one must remember how beautifully he writes above all else.

Newman points out that for classical anarchism the critique of political authority (power in the anarchist sense) is juxtaposed with and external

to the human subject. The essential human subject is uncontaminated by political authority and yet is still oppressed by it. "Anarchism, must therefore, have a place of resistance: a moral and rational place, a place uncontaminated by the power that oppresses it, from which will spring a rebellion against power." (113) Newman correctly points out the Manichaeism of this view. Anarchism creates an essential, moral opposition between society and the state, which—as he adds—Nietzsche would see as a perfect example of *ressentiment*. This is for two reasons. Firstly we have seen, it is based on the moral prejudice of the powerless against the powerful—the revolt of the slave against the master. Secondly, *ressentiment* is characterized by the fundamental need to identify oneself by looking outwards and in opposition towards an external enemy. This dialectic suggests that the identity of the subject is characterized as essentially rational and moral only insofar as the unfolding of these innate faculties and qualities is prevented by an outside force, in this case the State. Paradoxically the State, seen by anarchists as an obstacle to the full identity of man, is at the same time essential to the formation of this incomplete identity.

Power then is not localized in one area, and if we were to believe so we could only be reactive, creatures of *ressentiment*. Power resides everywhere and so we must recognize that our day-to-day lives create and reinforce congealed locations of power. If we reject essentialist identities which are suggested by basing our identities on rejection, then the most important question is how do we go on living?

*Beauty without the promise of happiness must be destroyed!*

John Moore in his article presents art in two varying forms—narcotizing and Dionysian. Moore makes a strong case for why decadent narcotizing art is predominant and why Dionysian art must prevail:

While narcotic art anaesthetizes existential pain and thus permits the continued operation of



power... Dionysian art or tragic art—an art for those restored to health—confronts the social sources of pain and stimulates the individual to affirm herself in and through her tragic conflict with control. (138)

One thing that I found lacking

*"I should believe only in a God who understood how to dance... Come, let us kill the spirit of gravity!" - Nietzsche*

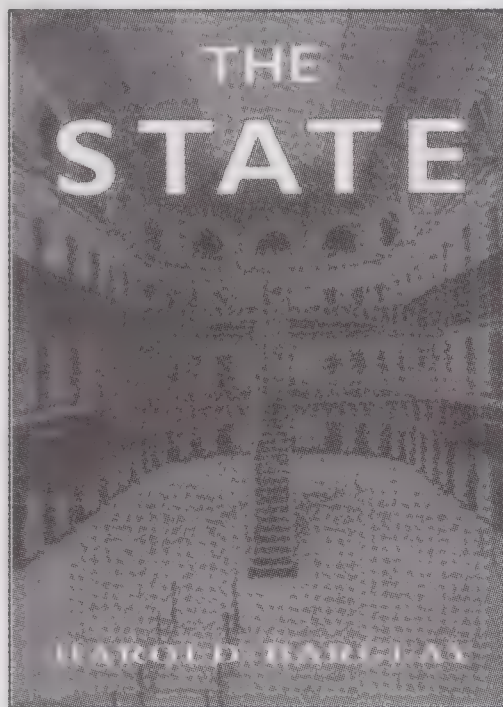
in this collection of essays was a comparison paper between Nietzsche and Stirner: a simple compare and contrast paper would greatly improve an understanding of individualist anarchism. The two philosophers are often hailed as primary inspirations for individualist anarchism and while they do have differences, they also converge on many points.

Overall this set of essays must be lauded for being one of the first forays into the ideas of Nietzsche by anarchist intellectuals. It is unfortunate that the intellectual spheres of anarchy are dominated by those from academic backgrounds with the usual baggage attached. For that I can only give you two remedies, read Nietzsche and begin to write for yourself.



# Breaking It Down

Reviewed by Ben Blue



## *The State*

by Harold Barclay  
(Freedom Press, London, 2003)  
paper, 112 pages £5.50

*The State* is a short brilliant work which I cannot recommend highly enough to anyone interested in the intersection of anthropology and political theory, regardless of their political leanings. Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* comes to mind as a writer who would find it interesting and informative. Barclay explores the same question that Diamond did (and the exploration of which won Diamond the Pulitzer Prize): the development of differences in access to power and wealth. Barclay writes from a perspective not shared by Diamond. He believes that the anthropological data sustain an anarchist analysis of government. This allows Barclay to address several other issues of critical importance.

We may inquire how it is that the great mass of people so eagerly and willingly submit to the state, especially when history shows that the state is an oppressive and abusive institution of rather recent appearance and that for thousands of years humans lived on this earth quite successfully without the state? If the state is oppressive why does it provide so many social services? Or how did the idea of the state originate anyway? Is there any alternative to state organization? (9-10)

One of the most refreshing aspects of *The State* is the clarity of the discourse. Chapter 1, "What Is a State?" sets out to define terms relevant to the discussion: society, law, power, authority, state, and government. Some terms receive broad, generalized definition for maximum application.

Society is a term which may apply to the social life of innumerable other animals besides humans. A society is any group of organisms which interact socially with one another over a prolonged period and, in so doing, evince a degree of mutual dependence and reciprocity, and distinguish themselves from other similar collectivities with which they do not have such intense interaction and dependence. (11)

To define the distinctions between power and authority, Barclay cites Max Weber, Proudhon, Bakunin, Paul Goodman, Erich Fromm, and Stanley Milgram, drawing upon notions of legitimacy and a distinction between "rational" and "irrational" authority. Power, quite simply "means the ability to get others to do what you want them to do" (p 17) without reference to whether

a social group recognizes its exercise as legitimate. The conclusion of this chapter notes that while there is no reason to assume an evolutionary scheme in cultural history requiring all tribal societies to become states, the main trajectory of history seems to be the transformation of stateless societies into state ones. The rest of the book explores why this is so.

Chapter 2 offers a classification of states, noting that "The state cannot be viewed as a monolithic entity that is eternally the same from its inception to the present, from America to Asia." (27) After briefly touching upon proto-states, Barclay introduces a primary distinction between pristine and secondary states, a few originals and many copies. Initially states formed in Mesopotamia and Egypt circa 4000 BCE. Other pristine states include China, the one created by the Olmec of Mexico, some Polynesian island groups, and perhaps India. Secondary states have derived from these, usually through imposition of external force, rather than by voluntary adoption of the idea. Another mode of classification Barclay offers is "according to relative size, where size includes a consideration of populations, area, military strength and wealth. We may speak of maximal, major, modest and minor states" (31-32).

The advantage of this schema is to reveal the immense difference between states, especially in relation to their power. A section on the decline of states yields the bad news that "There are no cases of a society once having been organized as a state reverting to an earlier anarchy." (37) A last distinction of classification made is between archaic and modern states. Archaic states, prior to the Medieval period in Europe, provided no social services, dividing expenditures between

*continued on page 28*



# Nuanced, Surreal & Academic

Reviewed by xYosefx

## ***The Garden of Peculiarities***

By Jesús Sepúlveda

(Feral House, Los Angeles, CA 2005)  
paper, 143 pages, \$12.00

Ideology crystallizes itself like a map in memory. It legitimizes itself by propagating the false idea that the world in which we live is the best possible world, or the system is the best system, regardless of its shortcomings. . .

Upon reading these words, the opening lines to *The Garden of Peculiarities*, many of this magazine's readers will doubtless feel a momentary sense of *déjà vu*, the feeling that they have read this all somewhere before. Although it was just published complete in English for the first time, much of the book has been serialized in *Green Anarchy*; indeed, of the forty-seven "fragments" that compose the text, sixteen have appeared in *GA*'s pages over the last four and a half years. Every issue since number seven (Winter 2001/2002) has featured an excerpt, leaving no doubt as to the importance ascribed to this book by *GA* in particular and the primitivist movement in general. The book's publisher goes so far as to call the book "the 21st-century successor to Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*" in their promotional material.

Originally published (in Spanish) in Argentina in 2002, the book covers familiar territory for those who have followed the anti-civilization discourse for the last decade. Mainstays such as domestication, the state, division of labor, technology and the impact of humans on our environment are dealt with in passages of situationist-inspired poesy interspersed with weighty academic jargon drawing on critical theory. Considering author Jesús Sepúlveda's history as a poet and publisher of a respected literary review and his cur-

rent position as a professor at the University of Oregon, this is unsurprising. This is not to say that the language is dry, just that the author sometimes employs overly-complicated turns of phrase and appears to have a fondness for philosophy and the Frankfurt School thinkers that may be off-putting to some.

"Reality is a garden of peculiarities forged from a constellation of other peculiarities." Early in the text the "garden of peculiarities" is introduced, a concept that comes up repeatedly throughout. According to Sepúlveda, "nature is peculiarity itself" and "poetry and art prevent the standardization of peculiarity," suggesting that his antecedents may be found in surrealism as much as the situationists. It seems as though he is trying to make his mark on radical philosophy in the manner of Debord, bringing a new concept into common usage. While his idea is not coherent enough to be epoch-defining in the same way as the concept of the spectacle has been, it is intriguing nonetheless, and will probably have a great impact on the growing body of green anarchist thought at the very least.

Some of Sepúlveda's language is problematic in the way we have come to expect from green anarchists, with uncritical and undefined references to nature and the natural abundance. However, a less dogmatic view is taken than one might expect today

Unfortunately, it just doesn't live up to four and a half years of being hyped as the next big thing.

from a writer self-identifying as an anarcho-primitivist. He writes that "the utilization of appropriate technology independent of the processes

JESÚS SEPÚLVEDA

## THE GARDEN OF PECULIARITIES

Ideology crystallizes itself like a map in memory. It legitimizes itself by propagating the false idea that the world in which we live is the best possible world, or the system is the best system, regardless of its shortcomings. For this reason, it is common to hear that socialism is better than capitalism, the free market is better than the proletarian state, democracy better than fascism, military dictatorship better than communism, republic better than monarchy, feudal bondage better than slavery, city better than country, etc. However many of these arguments are launched, they all are ultimately absurd because they tend to justify repression at the altar of a supposed necessary order.

TRANSLATION BY DANIEL MONTERO

of mass industrial production could be key in the hour of survival," a surprising statement considering the current popularity of "rewilding" and collapsist ideas in anarcho-primitivist circles. Many of his views are nuanced and articulated in a way one rarely sees in his milieu. The book is an invigorating read, more solidly written and less dogmatic than anything Zerzan has produced in years, more lucid and structured (if less emotionally powerful) than anything in Derrick Jensen's *oeuvre*.

Far more worrisome to me than any of the book's content is its back cover, featuring glowing praise from several thinkers prominent in anarcho-primitivist circles. Derrick Jensen, Ward Churchill and Chellis Glendinning describe the book as profound, powerful and a future classic. (Glendinning condescendingly writes that he "intertwines the learned language of the academician with the common sense of the campesino.") All three authors are



### The State review continued from page 26

the military and the royal entourage. Much of the populace had little awareness of the state in their daily lives.

Modern states, by contrast, employ up to ten percent of their populations in vast bureaucracies with increasingly technologically sophisticated methods of surveillance and control of the populace.

Chapter 3 tackles the meat of the issue: "The Origin of the State." This chapter is excerpted elsewhere in this issue.

There are no cases of a society having once been organized as a state ever reverting to an earlier anarchy.

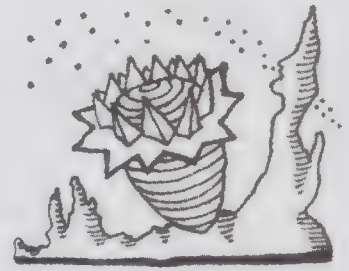
A final chapter, "The Modern State and its Future," reminds us that a knowledge of the history and dynamics of the state reveals one enduring and outstanding characteris-

tic—despotism. While the number of democracies has increased relative to oligarchies, theocracies, or absolute monarchies within the last two centuries, they remain despotic. Democracies

continue the despotic features of other polities: the hierarchy of the rulers and the ruled and the wealthy and the poor, compulsory membership, the obligation to obey all laws under pain of death or incarceration, the suppression of secession or separatism, the inculcation of a nationalist spirit, a devotion to military might, and the encouragement of submissiveness and dependence. (99)

Barclay briefly examines the competition states face from international corporations and concludes that, out of necessity, these corporations will form alliances with select states. The

modern state has also appeared threatened by federalist movements such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. The reality, of course, is that "all are devices for advancing the special political-economic interests of the advantaged and most predatory states and if they are not advanced through these bodies they are summarily ignored" (pp 103-104). The only realistic prospect for the dissolution of a multitude of states, so far as Barclay can see, is a monumental nuclear or environmental disaster. In the meantime we can ignore the state as much as possible and proceed to create areas of freedom and mutualism, Permanent Autonomous Zones. Barclay suggests a number of worthwhile activities to engage in, all familiar to regular readers of this publication. His closing paragraph honestly states, without a hint of utopianism, "None of this may make much of a dent in the establishment, but these things must be done if only to retain our humanity. Even if we descend to a *Mad Max* world, it should be the believers in freedom and justice who comprise the enclaves of refugee children." (106)



### The Garden of Peculiarities review continued from page 27

cited in the text as major thinkers with important ideas. The fourth quote comes from Lagos Nilsson, who is not only quoted inside but also happens to be the publisher of the original Spanish edition. To be honest, it comes across as the same "I scratch your back, you scratch mine" attitude that pervades academic publishing, where authors cite each other and appear in blurbs for each other's works in a blatant, commercial, and just plain tacky conflict of interest.

Because *The Garden of Peculiarities* is one of the most highly anticipated anarchist books of the last few years, I would hesitate at leaving out its weaknesses and simply cataloging its strengths. While I do feel that this is a book to be read and appreciated, its flaws are too prominent to go without mention. Parts of the book drag, and some of it is so weighted down with ponderous academic language as to be virtually impenetrable.

It is a pleasurable read overall, but after putting it down I did not walk away with the sense of having gained anything new. Unfortunately, it just doesn't live up to four and a half years of being hyped as the next big thing. While *The Garden of Peculiarities* is one of the more interesting books to come out of the anarcho-primitivist milieu, it is definitely neither the most ground-breaking nor the most important.



# Wolff Among the Sng'oi

Reviewed by Ben Blue

## ***Original Wisdom: Stories of an Ancient Way of Knowing***

by Robert Wolff

(Inner Traditions International  
Rochester 2001)

paper, 197 pages \$14.95

While the back cover of this book identifies it as a work on "Indigenous Spirituality," it would be a shame if that misrepresentation dissuaded my friends at *Green Anarchy* and elsewhere, averse to spirituality from delving into its contents.

The Library of Congress Cataloging-In-Publication Data more accurately defines it as a work on 1. Ethnophilosophy 2. Ethnopsychology 3. Human ecology 4. Senoi (Southeast Asian people).

What one can find, by reading it, is validation for much that Zerzan and other anarcho-primitivists have argued during the past two decades.

In the tiresome debate over the real nature of human nature invariably someone will point to the Yanomomo of Venezuela as an example to demonstrate Hobbes' thesis on humans in a state of nature.

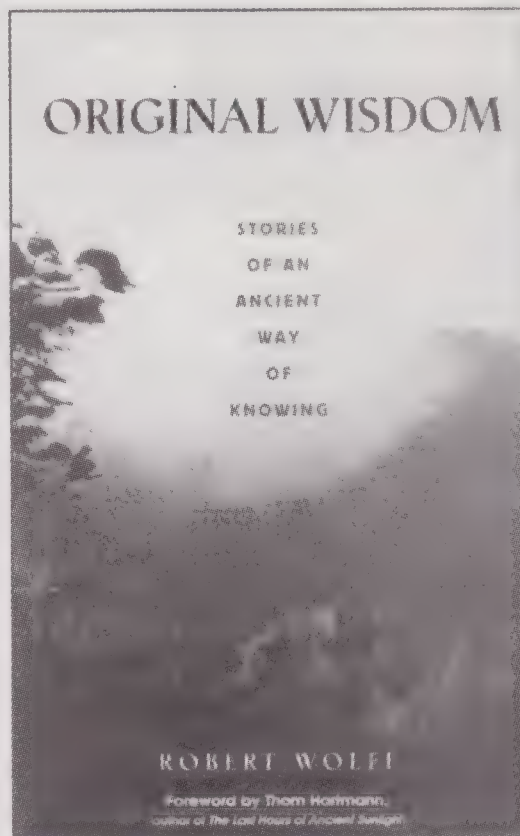
Yanomomo men have a tendency, in warfare, to beat infants against the ground and bash their brains out on rocks. Less frequently, others will point to the Senoi or Sng'oi of Malaysia as a counter-example to argue Rousseau's vision. According to the back cover of *Original Wisdom*: "The aboriginal Sng'oi of Malaysia—pre-industrial, pre-agricultural [sic]—live without cars or cell phones, without clocks or schedules, in a lush, green place where worry and hurry, competition and suspicion are not known." To me, conflicting interpretations of the significance of the life ways of the Yanomomo and the Sng'oi simply demonstrate the fallacy of over-generalizing from under-determined

anthropological data. There is no one true human nature valid for all human groups. For the record though, if I were to abandon industry and agriculture, I'd much rather spend my time with the Sng'oi.

The Wikipedia entry on the Senoi tells us that they are a Malaysian hunting and gathering people who were reported to make extensive use of lucid dreaming to ensure happiness and mental health. The entry goes on to explain controversies over substantiating this claim, with some anthropologists who have lived with them reporting that the Senoi are familiar with the concept of lucid dreaming and it is not of great importance to them. It becomes clear, in following linked articles, that a great deal of academic b.s. has been written about them.

The importance of *Original Wisdom*, written by a self-described white man, trained as a psychologist with a smattering of anthropology, is that unlike many others who have written about the Senoi, this author actually lived among them, learned their language and was accepted by them. Wolff writes:

I wondered what it was that affected me so deeply about the Sng'oi of Malaysia. Certainly, they had a kind of integrity that I had not sensed in other people. I loved their joyfulness, their ability to be in the present, their utter simplicity. When I was with them I was moved by the strange synchronicities (C.G. Jung's term) that so often occurred. How was it possible that people without a telephone knew that I was com-



ing to visit, when I did not know myself until a few hours before I left home?

How could one person know what another was thinking and feeling and dreaming? But perhaps more than anything else, with the Sng'oi I basked in a kind of unconditional love that is rare in Western societies and in societies that have become Westernized. I now know that I could find them only if they wanted to be found. They trusted me.

My love for a people who experienced reality directly, rather than through layers of learned concepts of what the world should be,



allowed me to rediscover a reality of my own that is as immediate and intimate as the world of the Sng'oi. I recognized that I had hidden this reality deep inside myself. I had always known that the world and I were inseparably one, but had suppressed that knowing, buried it under words and theories.

My friends the Sng'oi, and others of these stories, helped me regain the reality of being part of "All-That-Is." (4)

Throughout the book, there are fascinating insights of relevance to anarchists not only into Sng'oi, but also Malaysian culture, during the time that Wolff lived in and experienced it.

One of the basic tenets of Malay culture is that nobody tells anybody what to do. Adults never order a child older than about two to do something or not to do something. (47)

Thirty years ago Malay villages did not have a government as we understand it. There was no police to enforce laws. (50)

A common misconception holds that if something cannot be talked about, it does not exist or is not important.

In writing about Sng'oi experience of dreaming, Wolff clears up Western misconceptions about using lucid dreams to control the environment.

They did not think that they were sharing dreams as we think of dreams. The Sng'oi believe that the world we live in is a shadow world, and that the real world is behind it. At night, they believe, we visit that real world, and in the morning we share what we saw and learned there. The story that was created around the memories that four or five people brought back from the real world set the tone for the day ... It was very obvious that when a more or less coherent story was created around the images we shared, we who had slept in that shelter would live that story that day. Usually the stories were simple: a bird had shown the way to a tree that was bearing fruit. Later that day some of us would find that tree, and of course it did have ripe fruit. Or the story was about a bad storm. People would stay close to the shelter all day, and, yes, there was a big storm in late afternoon. (88-89)

The Sng'oi found it hilariously funny when Wolff tried to learn their language by writing down the sounds of the words. Why couldn't he just remember? They

insisted on learning how to write and found it an exciting adventure, a great party, better even than eating monkey. The next day, however, they realized there wasn't anything they could do with writing. They did not need it. Learning letters had been fun, but it was not really very useful.

One of the most interesting sections of the book relates the Sng'oi way of acquiring knowledge. Wolff wonders how it is that an illiterate Sng'oi friend, after a single visit with him to the beach, seeing the ocean for the first time, can return to report to his people the existence of undersea mountains, ocean currents, animals other than fish that are larger than elephants, and the interconnection of all oceans on a spherical earth. For those who wish to read the book, I won't spoil it by quoting extensively from the chapter on Wolff's initiation into Sng'oi shamanism. I will say that some of what Wolff learned seems isomorphic to what I learned in my experience of schizophreniform disorder. Neither of us feels capable of expressing adequately in English an experience that does not fit into Western concepts. A common misconception holds that if something cannot be talked about, it does not exist or is not important. Wolff's loving memories of the Sng'oi help to dispel this notion. *Original Wisdom* offers a compelling exploration of alienation that speaks to me in a way that the academic discourse of *Elements of Refusal* does not.





# Creating History

Reviewed by Dot Matrix

## **Creating Anarchy**

Ron Sakolsky

(Fifth Estate Books, Liberty 2005)  
paper, 215 pages \$15

*Creating Anarchy* works on a few levels – for example Sakolsky's concise and clear critique of issues like democracy and voting are refreshing and valuable in these days of "anybody but Bush." The first pieces in this book are bite size, e.g. interviews with Sakolsky and others that don't go very deeply into any of the things that they talk about, and descriptions of Sakolsky's experiences teaching or working on free radio projects. These are fine examples of lessons learned, but lessons that are easy to come by in most of our lives, so the audience is apparently young people without a

lot of experience in this arena.

The best parts of this book come later, and are on the history and relationship between surrealism and anarchist (or anti-state) thinking.

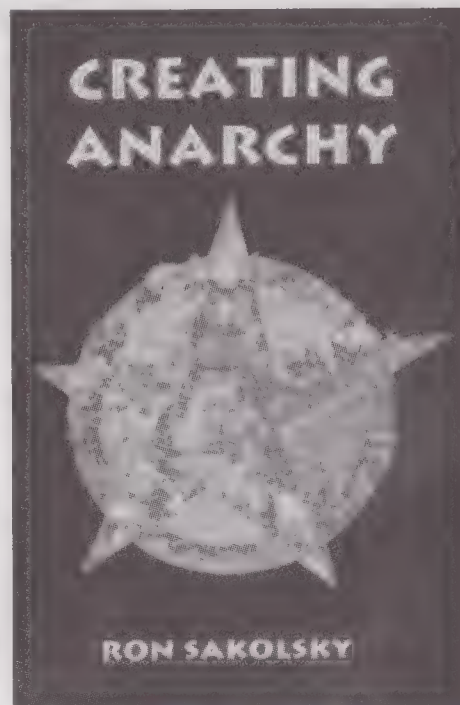
Sakolsky is a fine historian, intimately connected with his topic(s), knowledgeable and accessible in tone. These pieces are not just his thoughts about the connections between these two fields, but also introductions to various surrealist painters, poets and musicians, for readers who want more information about this tradition.

Some discordant notes

– **interpreting quotations:** Sakolsky quotes people and then explains what the quotation means. Is this because Sakolsky's history with the authors gives him an understanding of what they mean that is better than what they actually say? Perhaps that is the case, but if so, using quotations is a confusing way to make the given points.

– **word play:** I don't know why someone who has a background in, and information about, poetry would do some of the goofiness that Sakolsky does here. Phrases like "snivilization" "realpolitricks," and "evil of two lessers" are neither funny (although of course humor is in the perspective of the beholder) nor interesting commentary. Particularly irritating are simplistic references to animals as in any way relevant to state tendencies, as in "United Snakes of America." It's cheesiness like this that gives play a bad name.

Laura Corsiglia

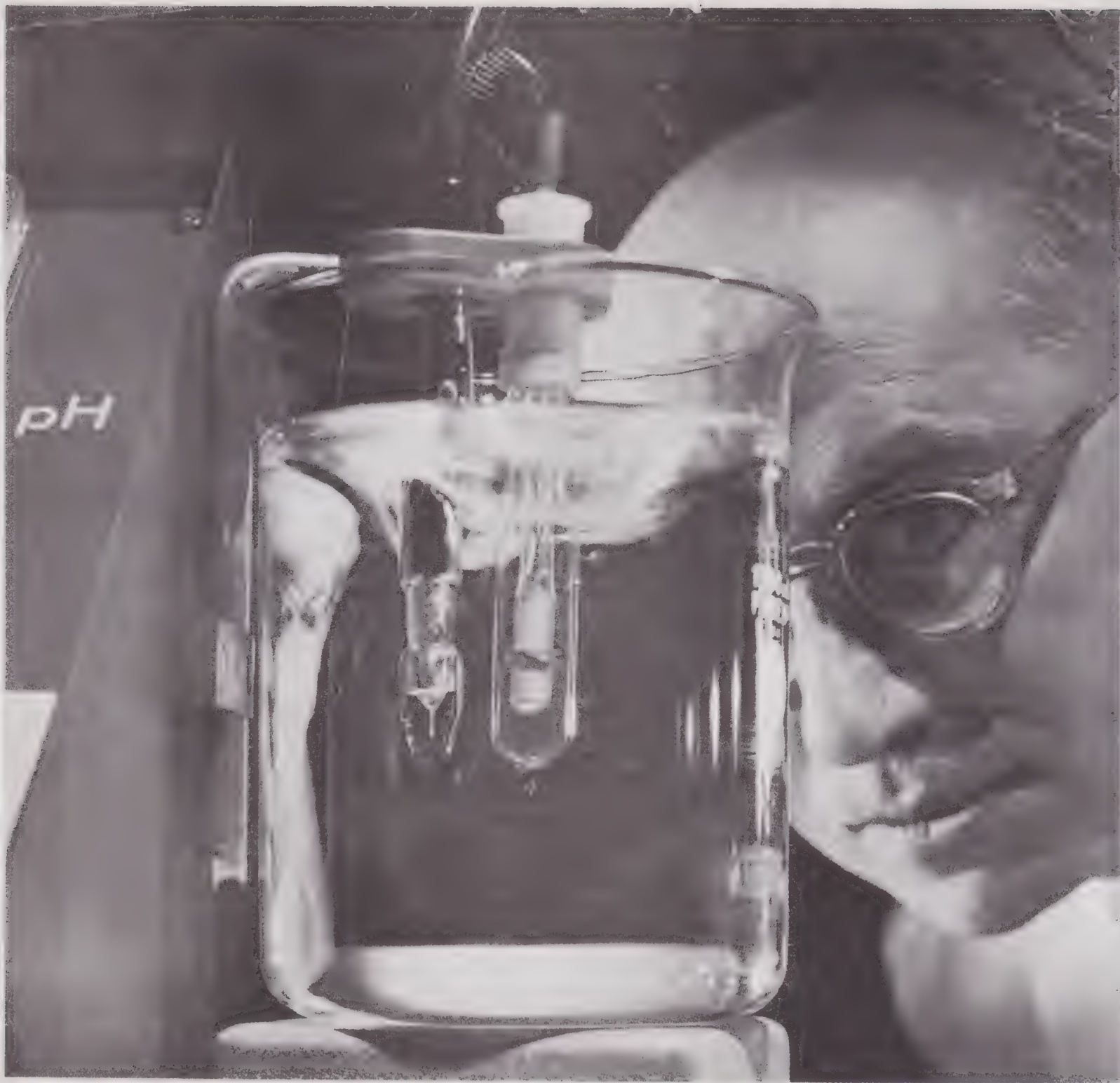


And ideally someone who's been around for as long as Sakolsky has would more explicitly challenge the life=good/death=bad thinking that is so taken for granted in this culture. He also does not evidence a critical thought about the building-an-anarchist-movement paradigm. Perhaps he has done thinking about this that is interesting and evocative, but there is no indication of that from these writings.

The book also includes pictures from various surrealist artists, including Don La Coss, Clifford Harper, Sue Simensky Bietila, Cathy Stoyko, Laura Corsiglia and others.







**Kodak perfects water**

Advertisement from 1969



# Science is Capital

## by Dot Matrix

Science is a system of knowledge acquisition that is based on empiricism, experimentation, atomization, rationality, causality, and methodological naturalism and that is aimed at finding the truth. Theories—predictive hypotheses—are the basic unit of knowledge in this system. Science also refers to the bodies of knowledge achieved from this research.

Most scientists feel that scientific investigation must adhere to the scientific method, a process for evaluating empirical knowledge under the working assumption of methodological materialism, which explains observable events in nature by natural causes without assuming the existence or non-existence of the supernatural. Particular specialized studies that make use of empirical methods are often referred to as sciences as well.<sup>2</sup>

Conversations about science get complicated since the word refers to distinct yet connected things. For example, physics is a science (a field of specialized studies) that is not always scientific (according to the above definition), since quantum physics moves away from the distinction between observer and observed that is fundamental to experimentation. However, to the extent that physicists reject the implications of that moving away, physics continues in the trajectory that science (as a way of thinking) has established.

Science must be critiqued as *the* modern problem-solving technique. Science is so widely accepted that for many people it has in fact become synonymous with problem solving. Even people who are critical of most other aspects of the culture we live in, find themselves reverting to science when pushed to defend their ideas, e.g. anti-civilization anarchists who refer to biology when attempting to convince about an optimal diet, or to anthropology to prove the superiority of their blue print for future societies.

Of the various ways to critique science, the most fundamental addresses the scientific method, which emphasizes a)

reproducibility, b) causality (that a thing or event causes another thing or event), and c) the relevance of things (material reality) over all else (more accurately, it emphasizes a specific perspective on material reality, the only perspective that science recognizes as valid). One problem with the scientific model is how it maintains and relies on a perspective of the world as a frozen (static) place. Also problematic is the idea that everything can be broken down into discrete, quantifiable parts, that the whole is never more than the sum of its parts. Underlying both of these perspectives are the premises that

the best or only way to know the world is to distance ourselves from it, to be outside of it; that this distance allows us to use the world; that utility is, in fact, the appropriate relationship to have to the world.

On a practical level there is the understanding that scientists are operating within a system that is based as much (if not more) on hierarchy and funding as it is on paying attention to what is actually going on around us. There are multiple accounts (even from conventional sources) showing that who is funding a study has a substantive impact on what the study discovers, from tobacco's impact on health to the possibility of restricting the spread of genetically modified organisms, but these examples are merely the most obvious.

The more subtle ones have to do with how we ask questions ("when did you stop beating your child?"), who we ask questions of (related to the questioner's access, biases, language, etc.), what questions we think to ask and how we understand the answers we get, as well as what meta-interests the questions serve (how are the assumptions of this culture fed and/or challenged by who, how, and of whom these questions get asked?).

Western education predisposes us to think of knowledge in terms of factual information, information that can be structured and passed on through books, lectures and programmed courses. Knowledge is something that can be acquired and accumulated, rather like stocks and bonds. By contrast, within the Indigenous world the act of coming to know something involves a personal

*Revolution can no longer be taken to mean just the destruction of all that is old and conservative, because capital has accomplished this itself. Rather it will appear as a return to something (a revolution in the mathematical sense of the term), a return to community, though not in any form that has existed previously. Revolution will make itself felt in the destruction of all that is most "modern" and "progressive" (because science is capital).*

— Jacques Camatte<sup>1</sup>



transformation. The knower and the known are indissolubly linked and changed in a fundamental way. Coming to know Indigenous [ways of knowing] can never be reduced to a catalogue of facts or a data base in a supercomputer, for it is a dynamical and living process, an aspect of the ever-changing, ever-renewing processes of nature.<sup>3</sup>

And on a philosophical level, knowledge is created from foundations that limit and construct it in specific ways. While on one hand science is a response to the superstition and hierarchy associated with religion, it also continues christianity's theme of a pure abstract and universal truth, separate from the sludge of everyday life, with scientists and doctors in the position of clergy, that is, people who know more about us than we do. Some people believe in science (as something they don't understand

that can solve their problems) in ways similar to how others believe in god. Some people cite scientific references the way that other people cite scripture.

It is the very premise of purity, of a static identity (a premise required by science), that is so falsifying to experience and so limiting to the sort of information that studiers can gather about the studied.

Traditionally, science posits a neutral objective observer, a fantastical being to compare to any angel or demon: this neutral observer has no interest other than truth, which comes from information, and information is received inside of laboratories, with carefully identified variables and carefully maintained control sets. (The mystification of this

awesome observer is only magnified,

not ameliorated, by the addition of peer

review, in which a body of knowledgeable col-

leagues examine the experiments and data to verify

their validity).<sup>4</sup>

Science exemplifies this culture's tendency to specialize, and consequently to create experts, people who know every little thing about specific bits, but not how those bits interact with other things—clearly a result of thinking that is thing-based (vs. for example, relationship-based). So for instance, practitioners of allopathic medicine prescribe multiple medications to people, frequently without having any idea about how these specific drugs will interact with each other, much less any idea about how a person's feelings are related to their physical health.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt uses the word scientism to express the logical extension of scientific thinking, which makes otherwise impossible moral or ethical questions (such as, "Can someone be worthless? And

if so, can that person be euthanized?") easily resolvable. In other words, the inhuman aspects of totalitarian states are related to the reliance of those states on science as the ultimate arbiter of value: indeed, the idea that everything must be of value is part of the scientific paradigm.

### Fragments on Why Anthropology Can't be Anarchist

By definition, anthropologists scientifically study groups of people—relationships, customs, behaviors, and social patterns. (The "scientifically" is what separates anthropologists from say, artists, comedians... or just curious people.) The history of anthropology is of civilized men and the occasional woman going to cultures foreign to them and reporting back about these cultures to their funders. As scientists—with all the quantifying and rationalist implications of that word—anthropologists are responsible for interpreting primitive/Other peoples to the mainstream. To the extent that anthropologists are mediators between the civilized and the barbaric, they are also part of a cultural trajectory that includes missionaries.

Anthropologists, as well as other social scientists, extend the realm of science by making people's homes into laboratories, by presuming that it is possible and appropriate to engage objectively with people in cultures very different from their own (or even people from their own culture), for the purpose of distilling the most meaningful information. And, as with all sciences, what is considered most meaningful is part of an on-going debate (with many unexplored and unquestioned assumptions), a debate ultimately framed by funders—from private grantors to universities. Why do people get paid to study people? What do the funders get for their money? They get increased markets (in the form of the studied), increased control of existing markets (more information about what motivates people—thus how to sell more effectively), and more products (from tourism to books to drugs).

As a discipline, anthropology is compelling for a number of mostly obvious reasons, including that it provides a more holistic view of people than the views from economics, political science, sociology, etc. More significantly, it provides evidence that our options as a species are more varied than we are taught to believe. Because anthropology provides people (who become anthropologists) with a funded way to do interesting things and have interesting conversations, and the kind of people who want to find out about other cultures can be intriguing people, it is tempting to conflate the people, and their experiences, with anthropology itself. But the study of people scientifically, the creation of experts, the context of meeting and learning about people while being funded by corporations, is inherently skewed and manipulative, no matter the intentions or integrity of the people involved.

In "Anthropologists and Other Friends," esteemed American Indian writer Vine Deloria Jr. brilliantly refutes the possibility of exploring people in a vacuum, by describ-



ing the reciprocal creation that happens between agents of mediation (in this case, anthropologists) and the mediated (in this case, Indians). Deloria examines how the anthropologists, by having clear ideas about what Indians do (i.e., who is Authentic) and by attending only to those Indians who are willing to act the way they're supposed to, encourage those Indians to continue acting Authentically, which then reinforces the anthropologists in their definitions and expectations. This creates a self-perpetuating cycle—a closed loop in which people from two groups create and support mutual judgments (which they take as fact). Two of these judgments are “real Indians do specific kinds of rituals” and “real anthropologists are experts in the culture that they study.” It is the very premise of purity, of a static identity (a premise required by science), that is so falsifying to experience and so limiting to the sort of information that studiers can gather about the studied. (This model of knowledge creates a similar dynamic between activists and the targets of their activism—leading people to embrace concepts like “real women,” “the real working class,” and “real wildness.”) To the extent that an activist is interacting—in theory or practice—with abstractions rather than with actual relationships, to that extent activists become invested in maintaining the distance between themselves and what- or whomever they are attempting to save. And interaction with abstractions (vs. relationships) is what is required for things like funding and school credit; it is what makes a work scientific.

Anthropologists will always emphasize the difference between the studied and the studier. This tendency is also demonstrated by all people who want (for reasons of money or status, or both) to be experts on another group of people and it usually means reifying (or freezing) the studied, attempting to keep them distinct, pure, Authentic.

In *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, David Graeber encourages us to “break down the wall” between cultures studied by anthropologists (cultures frequently described by words like “primitive” and “kin-based”) and modern societies. He posits this wall as the belief that some inherent, essential shift occurred to create modern cultures as fundamentally different from previous cultures. He suggests that it is much more interesting and relevant to look at the ways that we are the same as the people being studied. While his point about the usefulness of “the wall” is unassailable, the point is that creating and maintaining this wall is exactly what anthropol-

ogy is for. As Graeber himself notes, it's anthropology when people are talking about “primitives,” but sociology, political science, economics, architecture, psychology, etc. when talking about people like the studiers. Science insists that we distance ourselves—both as groups and as individuals—from the rest of the world, so as to more effectively use it. The social role

of anthropologists is that particular category of distancing that involves cultures that are Other along specifically those “primitive” and “kin-based” lines.

While major paradigms will always have offshoots that grow in tangential directions, these branches grow only to the extent that they are useful to the main body. Interesting people will want to do interesting things to and with the tradition, but to the extent that these people expect and work for recognition within the field, to the extent that they are judged by standards set within the field, to the extent that their work is used by corporations, then they are part of the scientific trajectory with all that that implies.

The only reason to stay distant from the Other, the whole *purpose* of an Other, is for control and manipulation, of both the Other and the Same. Put simply, Others are easier to kill (however that killing might look in different circumstances), and the easier they are to kill, the more both sides of the Same/Other split feel the pressure to conform.

Anthropology, like the other sciences, is useful to the status quo in its ability to make the studied into objects that can be manipulated and consumed by the current system, and in its ability to increase control over the studiers.

#### (Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Camatte, “Against Domestication,” *This World We Must Leave*, 113  
<sup>2</sup> , 1/4/2006

<sup>3</sup> F. David Peat in *Blackfoot Physics*, 2; Understanding knowledge as an individual thing, a matter of a relationship and personal transformation, and not something that an expert can use to fill up empty containers (aka students), is a fundamental challenge to the over-emphasis on Mass that currently effects our lives so intensely – from questions of democracy and social change, to industrialization and how work is structured, to our sense of our own personal relevance in the world.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aip.org/tip/INPHFA/vol-8/iss-6/p12.html>







# Primitivist Myths:

*excerpts from a ted kaczynski interview*

The following are excerpts from an interview of Ted Kaczynski by the Turkish group Veganarsý. The rough English is part of the original exchange.

V: I think you were a mathematician and you didn't have thoughts like now? What has changed your ideas wholly?

When did you started to think that the problem is in civilization?

Can you tell in a few words why you refuse civilization? How and when did you decide to live in forest and to bomb?

TK: A complete answer to these questions would be excessively long and complicated, but I will say the following: The process through which I came to reject modernity and civilization began when I was eleven years old. At that age I began to be attracted to the primitive way of life as a result of reading of the life of Neanderthal man. In the following years, up to the time when I entered Harvard University at the age of sixteen, I used to dream of escaping from civilization and going to live in some wild place. During the same period, my distaste for modern life grew as I became increasingly aware that people in industrial society were reduced to the status of gears in a machine, that they lacked freedom and were at the mercy of the large organizations that controlled the conditions under which they lived. After I entered Harvard University I took some courses in anthropology, which taught me more about primitive peoples and gave me an appetite to acquire some of the knowledge that enabled them to live in the wild. For example, I wished to have their knowledge of edible plants. But I had no idea where to get such knowledge until a couple of years later, when I discovered to my surprise that there were books about edible wild plants. The first such a book that I bought was *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, by Euell Gibbons, and after that when I was home from college and graduate school during the summers, I went several times each week to the Cook County Forest Preserves near Chicago to look for edible plants. At first it

seemed eerie and strange to go all alone into the forest, away from all roads and paths. But as I came to know the forest and many of the plants and animals that lived in it, the feeling at strangeness disappeared and I grew more and more comfortable in the woodland. I also became more and more certain that I did not want to spend my whole life in civilization, and that I wanted to go and live in some wild place. Meanwhile, I was doing well in mathematics. It was fun to solve mathematical problems, but in a deeper sense mathematics was boring and empty because for me it had no purpose. If I had worked on applied mathematics I would have contributed to

the development of the technological society that I hated, so I worked only on pure mathematics. But pure mathematics was only a game. I did not understand then, and I still do not understand, why mathematicians are content to frit- ter away their whole lives in a mere game. I myself was completely dissatisfied with such a life. I knew what I wanted: To go and live in some wild place. But I didn't know how to do so. In those days there were no primitivist movements, no survivalists, and anyone who left a promising career in mathematics to go live among forests or mountains would have been regarded as foolish or crazy. I did not know even one person who would have understood why I wanted to do such a thing. So, deep in my heart, I felt convinced that I would never be able to escape from civilization. Because I found modern life absolutely unacceptable, I grew increasingly hopeless until, at the age of 24, I arrived at a kind of crisis: I felt so miserable that I didn't care whether I lived or died. But when I reached that point, a sudden change took place: I realized that if I didn't care whether I lived or died, then I didn't need to fear the consequences of anything I might do. Therefore I could do anything I wanted. I was free! That was the great turning-point in my life because it was then that I acquired courage, which has remained with me ever since. It was at that time, too, that I became certain that I would soon go to live in the wild, no matter what the consequences. I spent two years teaching at the University of Cali-

Jennie Mitchell



fornia in order to save some money, then I resigned my position and went to look for a place to live in the forest. It would take too much time to give a complete answer to the last part of your question, but I will give you a partial answer by quoting what I wrote for my journal on August 14, 1983:

The farther back we can push technology, the father back we will push civilization. If we could push technology all the way back to the stone age, there would be no more civilization.

"The fifth of August I began a hike to the east. I got to my hidden camp that I have in a gulch beyond what I call Diagonal Gulch. I stayed there through the following day, August 6. I felt the peace of the forest there. But there are few huckleberries there, and though there are deer, there is very little small game. Furthermore, it had been a long time since I had seen the beautiful and isolated plateau where the various branches of Trout Creek originate. So I decided to take off for that area on the 7th of August. A little after crossing the roads in the neighborhood of Crater Mountain I began to hear chain saws; the sound seemed to be coming from the upper reaches of Roaster Bill Creek. I assumed they were cutting trees; I didn't

like it but I thought I would be able to avoid such things when I got onto the plateau.

Walking across the hillsides on my way there, I saw down below me a new road that had not been there previously, and that appeared to cross one of the ridges that close in Stemple Creek. This made me feel a little sick. Nevertheless, I went on to the plateau. What I found there broke my heart. The plateau was criss-crossed with new roads, broad and well-made for roads of that kind. The plateau is ruined forever. The only thing that could save it now would be the collapse of the technological society. I couldn't bear it. That was the best and most beautiful and isolated place around here and I have wonderful memories of it. One road passed within a couple of hundred feet of a lovely spot where I camped for a long time a few years ago and passed many happy hours.

Full of grief and rage I went back and camped by South Fork Humbug Creek..."

The next day I started for my home cabin. My route took me past a beautiful spot, a favorite place of mine where there was a spring of pure water that could safely be drunk without boiling. I stopped and said a kind of prayer to the spirit of the spring. It was a prayer in which I swore that I would take revenge for what was being done to the forest. My journal continues:

"... and then I returned home as quickly as I could because—I have something to do!"  
You can guess what it was that I had to do.

V: What is the reason that you made you decided to bomb technological areas?

What do you think, how can we destroy civilization, what will make it became closer for you?

TK: The problem of civilization is identical with the problem of technology. Let me first explain that when I speak of technology I do not refer only to physical apparatus such as tools and machines. I include also techniques, such as the techniques of chemistry, civil engineering, or biotechnology. Included too are human techniques such as those of propaganda or of educational psychology, as well as organizational techniques which could not exist at an advanced level without the physical apparatus—the tools, machines, and structures—on which the whole technological system depends. However, technology in the broader sense of the word includes not only modern technology but also the techniques and physical apparatuses that existed at earlier stages of society. For example, plows, harness for animals, blacksmith's tools, domesticated breeds of plants and animals, and the techniques of agriculture, animal husbandry, and metalworking. Early civilizations depended on these technologies, as well as on the human and organizational techniques needed to govern large numbers of people. Civilizations cannot exist without the technology on which they are based. Conversely, where the technology is available civilization is likely to develop sooner or later. Thus, the problem of civilization can be equated with the problem of technology. The farther back we can push technology, the father back we will push civilization. If we could push technology all the way back to the stone age, there would be no more civilization.

V: Don't you think violence is violence?

TK: Of course, violence is violence. And violence is also a necessary part of nature. If predators did not kill members of prey species, then the prey species would multiply to the point where they would destroy their environment by consuming everything edible. Many kinds of animals are violent even against members their own species. For example, it is well known that wild chimpanzees often kill other chimpanzees. See *Time Magazine*, August 19, 2002, page 56. In some regions, fights are common among wild bears. The magazine *Bear and Other Top Predators*, Volume 1, Issue 2, pages 28-29, shows a photograph of bears fighting and a photograph of a bear wounded in a fight, and mentions that such wounds can be deadly. Among the sea birds called brown boobies, two eggs are laid in each nest. After the eggs are hatched, one of the young birds attacks the other and forces it out of the nest, so that it dies. See article "Sibling Des-

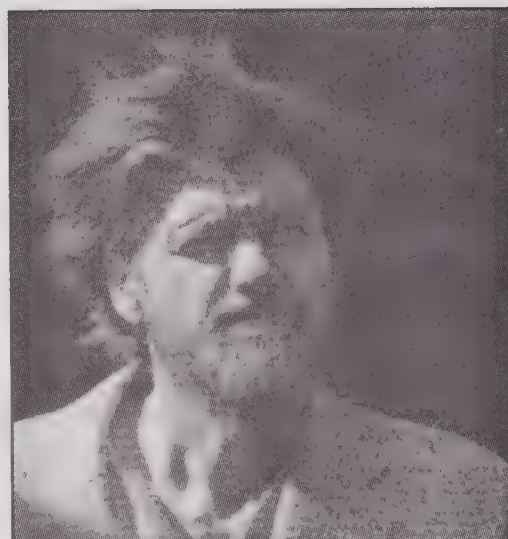


perado," *Science News*, Volume 163, February 15, 2003. Human beings in the wild constitute one of the more violent species. A good general survey of the cultures of hunting-and-gathering people is *The Hunting Peoples*, by Carleton S. Coon, published by Little, Brown and Company, Boston and Toronto, 1971, and in this book you will find numerous examples in hunting-and-gathering societies of violence by human beings against other human beings. Professor Coon makes clear (pages XIX, 3, 4, 9, 10) that he admires hunting-and-gathering peoples and regards them as more fortunate than civilized ones. But he is an honest man and does not censor out those aspects of primitive life, such as violence, that appear disagreeable to modern people. Thus, it is clear that a significant amount of violence is a natural part of human life. There is nothing wrong with violence in itself. In any particular case, whether violence is good or bad depends on how it is used and the purpose for which it is used. So why do modern people regard violence as evil in itself? They do so for one reason only: They have been brainwashed by propaganda. Modern society uses various forms of propaganda to teach people to be frightened and horrified by violence because the techno-industrial system needs a population that is timid, docile, and afraid to assert itself, a population that will not make trouble or disrupt the orderly functioning of the system. Power depends ultimately on physical force. By teaching people that violence is wrong (except, of course, when the system itself uses violence via the police or the military), the system maintains its monopoly on physical force and thus keeps all power in its own hands. Whatever philosophical or moral rationalizations people may invent to explain their belief that violence is wrong, the real reason for that belief is that they have unconsciously absorbed the system's propaganda.

V: How do you see anarchists, green-anarchists, anarcho-primitivists? Do you agree with them? How do you see vegetarianism/veganism? What do you think about not eating and using animals? What do you think about Animal/Earth Liberation?

What do you think about groups such as Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front and Gardening Guerillas?

TK: All of the groups you mention here are part of a single movement. (Let's call it the "GA Movement," for green anarchist.) Of course, these people are right to the extent that they oppose civilization and the technology on which it is based. But, because of the form in which this movement is developing, it may actually help to protect the techno-industrial system and may serve as an obstacle to revolution. I will explain. It is difficult to suppress rebellion directly. When rebellion is put down by force, it very often breaks out again later in some new form in which the authorities find it more



difficult to control. For example, in 1878 the German Reichstag enacted harsh and repressive laws against the Social-Democratic movement, as a result of which the movement was crushed and its members were scattered, confused, and discouraged, but only for a short time. The movement soon reunited itself, became more energetic, and found new ways of spreading its ideas, so that by 1884 it was stronger than ever (G.A. Zimmermann, *Das Neunzehnte Jahrhundert: Geschichtlicher und kulturhistorischer Rückblick*, Druck und Verlag von Geo. Brumder, Milwaukee, 1902, page 23).

Thus, astute observers of human affairs know that the powerful classes of a society can most effectively defend themselves against rebellion by using force and direct repression only to a limited extent, and relying mainly on manipulation to deflect rebellion. One of the most effective devices used is that of providing channels through which rebellious impulses can be expressed in ways that are harmless to the system. For example, it is well known that in the Soviet Union the satirical magazine *Krokodil* was designed to provide an outlet for complaints and for resentment of the authorities in a way that

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would lead no one to question the legitimacy of the Soviet system or rebel against it in any serious way. But the democratic system of the West has evolved mechanisms for deflecting rebellion that are far more sophisticated and effective than any that existed in the Soviet Union. It is a truly remarkable fact that in modern Western society people rebel in favor of



the values of the very system against which they imagine themselves to be rebelling. The left rebels in favor of racial and religious equality, equality for women and homosexuals, humane treatment of animals, and so forth. But these are the values that the American mass media promotes in us over and over every day. Leftists have been so thoroughly brainwashed by media propaganda that they are able to rebel only in terms of these values, which are values of the techno-industrial system itself.

In this way the system has successfully deflected the rebellious impulses of the left into channels that are harmless to the system. Rebellion against technology and civilization is real rebellion, a real attack on the values of the existing system. But the green anarchists, anarcho-primitivists, and so forth (the "GA Movement"), have fallen under such heavy influence from the left that their rebellion against civilization has to a great extent been neutralized. Instead of rebelling against the values of civilization, they have adopted many civilized values themselves and have constructed an imaginary picture of primitive societies that embodies these civilized values. They pretend that hunter-gatherers worked only two or three hours a day (which would come to 14 to 21 hours a week), that they had gender equality, that they respected the rights of animals, that they took care not to damage their environment, and so forth. But all that is a myth. If you read many reports written by people who personally observed hunting-and-gathering societies at a time when these were relatively free of influence from civilization, you will see that

- (i) All of these societies ate some form of animal food, none were vegan.
- (ii) Most (if not all) of these societies were cruel to animals.
- (iii) The majority of these societies did not have gender equality.
- (iv) The estimate of two or three hours of work a day, or 14 to 21 hours per week, is based on a misleading definition of "work". A more realistic minimum estimate for fully nomadic hunter-gatherers would probably be about forty hours of work per week, and some worked a great deal more than that.

(v) Most of these societies were not nonviolent.

(vi) Competition existed in most, or probably all of these societies. In some of them competition could take violent forms.

(vii) These societies varied greatly in the extent to which they took care not to damage their environment. Some may have been excellent conservationists, but others damaged their environment through over-hunting, reckless use of fire, or in other ways.

I could cite numerous reliable sources of information in support of the foregoing statements, but if I did so this letter would become unreasonably long. So I will reserve full documentation for a more suitable occasion. Here I mention only a few examples.

#### Cruelty to animals –

Mbuti pygmies: "The youngster had spread it with his first thrust, pinning the animal to the ground through the fleshy part of the stomach. But the animal was still very much alive, fighting for freedom. ...Maipé put another spear into its neck, but it still writhed and fought. Not until a third spear pierced its heart did it give up the struggle.

"... [T]he Pygmies stood around in an excited group, pointing at the dying animal and laughing... At other times I have seen Pygmies singeing the feathers off birds that were still alive, explaining that the meat is more tender if death comes slowly. And the hunting dogs, valuable as they are, get kicked around mercilessly from the day they are born to the day they die." (Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People*, Simon and Schuster, 1962, page 101) Eskimos: The Eskimos with whom Gontran de Poncins lived kicked and beat their dogs brutally. (Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloona*, Time-Life Books, Alexandria, Virginia, 1980, pages 29, 30, 49, 189, 196, 198-99, 212, 216) Siriono: The Siriono sometimes captured young animals alive and brought them back to camp, but they gave them nothing to eat, and the animals were treated so roughly by the children that they soon died. (Allan R. Holmberg, *Nomads of the Long Bow: The Siriono of Eastern Bolivia*, The Natural History Press, Garden City, New York, 1969, pages 69-70, 208) (The Siriono were not pure hunter-gatherers, since they did plant crops to a limited extent at certain times of year, but they lived mostly by hunting and gathering. Holmberg, pages 51, 63, 67, 76-77, 82-83, 265)

Lack of gender equality –

Turnbull says that among the Mbuti pygmies, "A woman is in no way the social inferior of a man." (Colin Turnbull, *Wayward Servants*, The Natural History Press, Garden City, New York, 1965, page 270), and that "the woman is not discriminated against." (Turnbull, *The Forest People*, page 154). But in the very same books Turnbull states a number of facts that show that the Mbuti did not have gender equality as that term is understood today. "A certain amount of wife-beating is considered good, and the wife is expected to fight back." *Wayward Servants*, page 287. "He said that he was very content with his wife, and he had not found it necessary to beat her at all often." (*The Forest People*, page



205). Man throws his wife to the ground and slaps her. (*Wayward Servants*, page 211). Husband beats wife. (*Wayward Servants*, page 192). Mbuti practice what Americans would call date rape. (*Wayward Servants*, page 137). Turnbull mentions two instances of men giving orders to their wives (*Wayward Servants*, page 288-89; *The Forest People*, page 265). I have not found any instance in Turnbull's books of wives giving orders to their husbands. Siriono: The Siriono did not beat their wives (Holmberg, page 128). But: "A woman is subservient to her husband" (page 125). "The extended family is generally dominated by the oldest active male" (page 129). "[W]omen... are dominated by the men" (page 147). "Sexual advances are generally made by the men... If a man is out in the forest alone with a woman ... he may throw her to the ground roughly and take his prize without so much saying a word" (page 163). Parents definitely prefer to have male children, (page 202; also see pages 148, 156, 168-69, 210, 224). Australian Aborigines: "Farther north and west [in Australia] ... [p]erceptible power lay in the hands of the mature, fully initiated, and usually polygamous men of the age group from thirty to fifty, and the control over the women and younger males was shared between them." (Carleton S. Coon, *The Hunting Peoples*, page 255) Among some Australian tribes, young women were forced to marry old men, mainly so that they would work for the men. Women who refused were beaten until they gave in. (Aldo Massola, *The Aborigines of South-Eastern Australia: As They Were*, The Griffin Press, Adelaide, Australia, 1971. I don't have the exact page, but you will probably find the foregoing between pages 70 and 80).

#### Time spent working -

A good general discussion of this is by Elizabeth Cashdan, "Hunters and Gatherers: Economic Behaviour in Bands," in Stuart Plattner (editor), *Economic Anthropology* (Stanford University Press, 1989, pages 21-48). Cashdan discusses a study by Richard Lee, who found that a certain group of !Kung Bushmen worked a little more than forty hours per week. And she points out on pages 24-25 that there was evidence that Lee's study was made at a time of year when the !Kung worked least, and they may have worked a great deal more at other times of year. She points out on page 26 that Lee's study did not include time spent on care of children. And on pages 24-25 she mentions other hunter-gatherers who worked longer hours than the Bushmen studied by Lee. Forty hours per week

is probably a minimum estimate of the working time of fully nomadic hunter-gatherers. Gontran de Poncins, *Kabloona* (cited earlier), page 111, stated that the Eskimos with whom he lived toiled fifteen hours a day. He probably did not mean that they worked fifteen hours every day, but it is clear from his book that his Eskimos worked plenty hard. Among the Mbuti pygmies who use nets to hunt, "Net-making is virtually a full-time occupation ... in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the inclination." (Turnbull, *The Forest People*, page 131) Among the Siriono, the men hunted, on average, every other day. (Holmberg, pages 75-76) They started at daybreak and returned to camp typically between four and six o'clock in the afternoon. (Holmberg, pages 100-101) This makes on average at least eleven hours of hunting, and at three and a half days a week it comes to an average of 38 hours of hunting per week, at the least. Since the men also did a significant amount of work on days when they did not hunt (pages 76, 100), their work week, averaged over the year, had to be far more than forty hours. Actually, Holmberg estimated that the Siriono spent about half their waking time in hunting and foraging (page 222), which would mean about 56 hours a week in these activities alone. With other work included, the work week would have had to be well over sixty hours. The Siriono woman "enjoys even less respite from labor than her husband," and "the obligation of bringing her children to maturity leaves little time for rest." (Holmberg, page 224. For other information indicating how hard the Siriono had to work, pages 87, 107, 157, 213, 220, 223, 246, 248-49, 254, 268)

Violence -

How ridiculous is the image of primitive peoples as non-competitive, vegetarian conservationists who had gender equality, respected the rights of animals, and didn't have to work for a living.

As mentioned earlier, numerous examples of violence can be found in Coon's *The Hunting Peoples*. According to Gontran de Poncins (*Kabloona*, pages 116-120, 125, 162-165, 237-238, 244) homicides—usually by a stab in the back—were rather common among his Eskimos. The Mbuti pygmies were probably one of the least violent primitive peoples that I know of, since Turnbull reports no cases of homicide among them (apart



from infanticide; see *Wayward Servants*, page 130). However, throughout *The Forest People* and *Wayward Servants* Turnbull mentions many beatings and fights with fists or sticks. Paul Schebesta reports evidence that during the first half of the 19th century the Mbuti waged deadly warfare against the village-dwelling Africans who also lived in their forest. (*Die Bambuti-Pygäen vom Ituri*, Volume I, Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Brussels, 1938, pages 81-84. For infanticide, see Schebesta, page 138)

#### Competition –

The presence of competition in hunting-and-gathering societies is shown by the fights that occurred in some of them. See for example Coon, *The Hunting Peoples* (pages 238, 252, 257-58). If a physical fight isn't a form of competition, then nothing is. Fights may arise from competition for mates. For instance, Turnbull (*Wayward Servants*, page 206) mentions a woman who lost three teeth in fighting with another woman over a man. Coon (page 260) mentions fighting over women by Australian aboriginal men. Competition for food may also lead to quarreling. "This is not to say that sharing [of meat] takes place without any dispute or acrimony. On the contrary, the arguments that ensue when the hunt returns to camp are frequently long and loud ..." (*Wayward Servants*, page 158) Coon refers to "vociferous arguments" over sharing of whale meat among certain Eskimos. (*The Hunting Peoples*, page 125)

I could go on and on citing concrete facts that show how ridiculous is the image of primitive peoples as non-competitive, vegetarian conservationists who had gender equality, respected the rights of animals, and didn't have to work for a living. But this letter is already too long, so the examples already given will have to suffice. I don't mean to say that the hunting-and-gathering way of life was no better than modern life. On the contrary, I believe it was better beyond comparison.

Many, perhaps most investigators who have studied hunter-gatherers have expressed their respect, their admiration, or even their envy of them. For example, Cashdan (page 21) refers to the hunting-and-gathering way of life as "highly successful". Coon (page XIX) refers to the "full and satisfactory lives" of hunter-gatherers. Turnbull writes: "[The Mbuti] were a people who had found in the forest something that made their life more than just worth living, something that made it, with all its hardships and problems and tragedies, a wonderful thing full of joy and happiness and free of care." (*The Forest People*, page 26) Schebesta writes (page 73): "How varied are the dangers, but also the joyous experiences on his hunting-excursions and countless journeys

through the primeval forest! We of an un-poetic, mechanical age can have no more than an inkling of how deeply all of that touches *The Forest People* in their mystical-magical thinking and shapes their attitude." And on page 205: "The pygmies stand before us as one of the most natural of human races, as people who live exclusively in compliance with nature and without violation of their physical organism. Among their principal traits are an unusually sturdy naturalness and liveness, and an unparalleled cheerfulness and freedom from care. They are people whose lives pass in compliance with the laws of nature." But obviously the reasons why primitive life was better than civilized life had nothing to do with gender equality, kindness to animals, non-competitiveness, or nonviolence. Those values are the soft values of modern civilization. By projecting those values onto hunting-and-gathering societies, the GA Movement has created a myth of a primitive utopia that never existed in reality. Thus, even though the GA Movement claims to reject civilization and modernity, it remains enslaved to some of the most important values of modern society. For this reason, the GA Movement cannot be an effective revolutionary movement. In the first place, part of the GA Movement's energy is deflected away from the real revolutionary objective—to eliminate modern technology and civilization in general—in favor of the pseudo-revolutionary issues of racism, sexism, animal

rights, homosexual rights, and so forth. In the second place, because of its commitment to these pseudo-revolutionary issues, the GA Movement may attract too many leftists—people who are less interested in getting rid of modern civilization than they are in the leftist issues of racism, sexism, etc. This would cause a further deflection of the movement's energy away from the issues of technology and civilization. In the third place, the objective of securing the rights of women, homosexuals, animals, and so forth, is incompatible with the objective of eliminating civilization, because women and homosexuals in primitive societies often do not have equality, and such societies are usually cruel to animals. If one's goal is to secure the rights of these groups, then one's best policy is to stick with modern civilization. In the fourth place, the GA Movement's adoption of many of the soft values of modern civilization, as well as its myth of a soft primitive utopia, attracts too many soft, dreamy, lazy, impractical people who are more inclined to retreat into utopian fantasies than to take effective, realistic action to get rid of the techno-industrial system. In fact, there is grave danger that the GA Movement may take the same route as Christianity. Originally, under the personal leadership of Jesus Christ, Christianity was not only a religious movement but also a movement toward social revolution. As a purely



religious movement Christianity turned out to be successful, but as a revolutionary movement it was a complete failure. It did nothing to correct the social inequalities of its time, and as soon as the Christians had an opportunity to make a deal with the emperor Constantine they sold out and became part of the power-structure of the Roman Empire. There appear to be some disquieting resemblances between the psychology of the GA Movement and that of early Christianity. The analogies between the two movements are striking: primitive utopia = Garden of Eden; development of civilization = the Fall, original sin, eating the apple from the Tree of Knowledge; the Revolution = Day of Judgment; return to primitive utopia = arrival of the Kingdom of God. Veganism probably plays the same psychological role as the dietary restrictions of Christianity (fasting during Lent) and of other religions. The risks taken by activists in using their bodies to block logging machinery and so forth can be compared to the martyrdom of early Christians who died for their beliefs (except that the Christians' martyrdom required far more courage than the tactics of today's activists). If the GA Movement takes the same path as Christianity, it too will be a complete failure as a revolutionary movement.

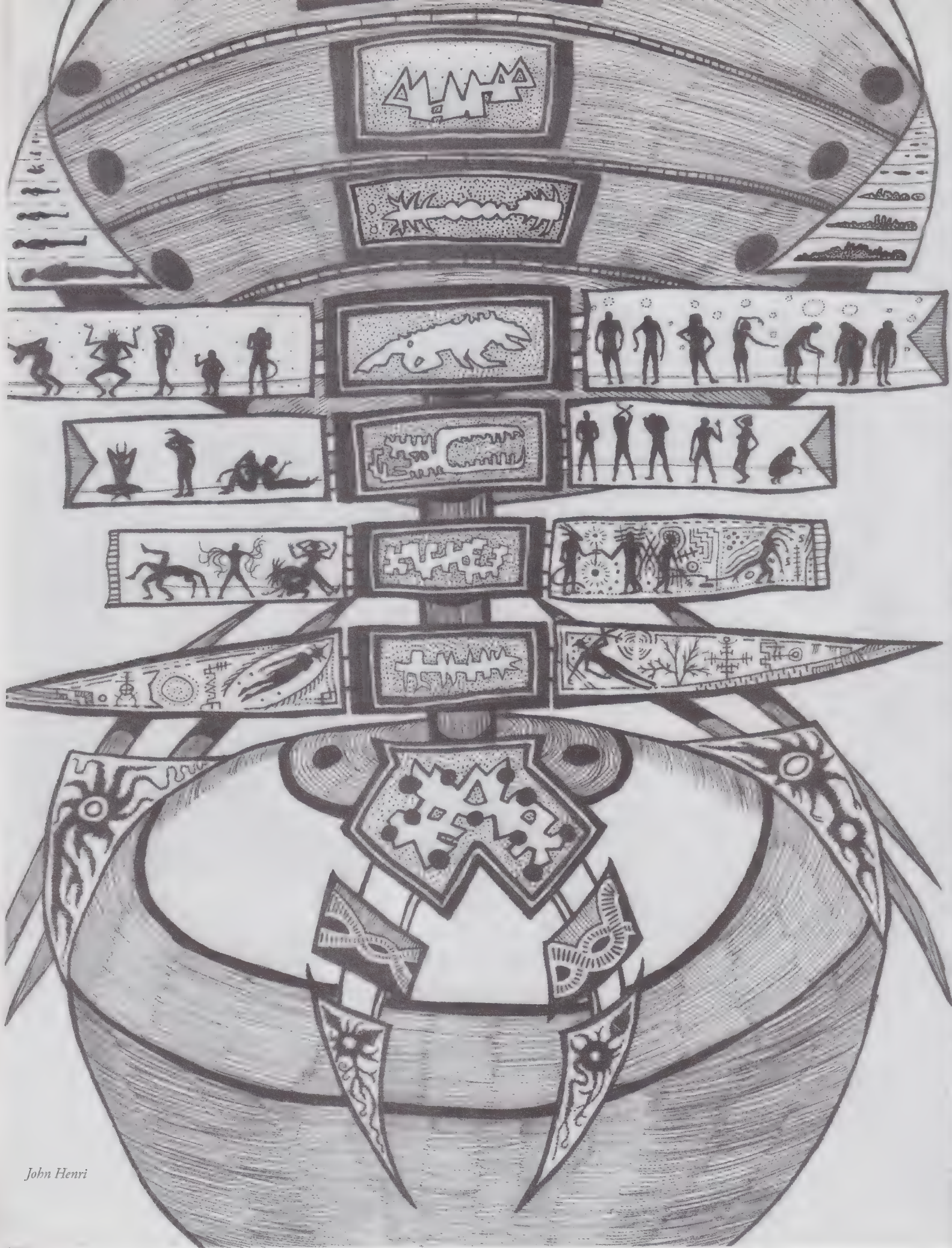


The GA Movement may be not only useless, but worse than useless, because it may be an obstacle to the development of an effective revolutionary movement. Since opposition to technology and civilization is an important part of the GA Movement's program, young people who are concerned about what technological civilization is doing to the world are drawn into that movement. Certainly not all of these young people are leftists or soft, dreamy, ineffectual types; some of them have potential to become real revolutionaries. But in the GA Movement they are outnumbered by leftists and other useless people, so they are neutralized, they become corrupted, and their revolutionary potential is wasted. In this sense, the GA Movement could be called a destroyer of potential revolutionaries. It will be necessary to build a new revolutionary movement that will keep itself strictly separate from the GA Movement and its soft, civilized values. I don't mean that there is anything wrong with gender equality, kindness to animals, tolerance of homosexuality, or the like. But these values have no relevance to the effort to eliminate technological civilization. They are not revolutionary values. An effective revolutionary movement will have to adopt instead the hard values of primitive societies, such as skill, self-discipline, honesty, physical and mental stamina, intolerance of externally imposed restraints, capacity to endure physical pain, and, above all, courage.



The analogies between the GA and Christian movements are striking: primitive utopia = Garden of Eden; development of civilization = the Fall, original sin, eating the apple from the Tree of Knowledge; the Revolution = Day of Judgment.







# ANTHROPOLOGY: *Want Some Anarchy With That?*

by Lawrence Jarach

In 1983 I graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in Cultural Anthropology. During that time the foremost school of thought in the field was—as it remains—the discourse that resulted from the pivotal Man the Hunter symposium that took place at the University of Chicago in 1966. This event created an upheaval in the world of the humanities; before then, the main idea in anthropology and other social sciences was that hunting for game was the defining social activity of primitive people<sup>1</sup>. In addition, most anthropologists still favored Hobbes' "nasty, brutish, and short" picture of primitive life. This symposium changed all that. Since then, it is taken as a given (based on incontrovertible ethnographic evidence) that primitive people rely most heavily on plant and small animal foods (that can be easily gathered without hunting)<sup>2</sup>; such cultures could more accurately be referred to as "gatherer-hunters" rather than hunter-gatherers (the first term emphasizes the method providing the most calories). The other mistaken idea attributed to primitive cultures was that gatherer-hunter people were constantly on the edge of starvation; Marshall Sahlins was instrumental in showing this fallacy with his submission "The Original Affluent Society." While various challenges have been made to his idea that primitive people engaged in work<sup>3</sup> on average two to three hours per day, all who look at the data concur that primitive people work far less than any sedentary people, not to mention those of us who live in industrial and urban centers.

It's difficult today to appreciate the profound changes that resulted from the Man the Hunter symposium and the many articles and books that came out of it. This was a time of serious transformation of the field of anthropology, which until then had been a less-than-stellar social science in terms of positive contributions to the liberation of humanity.

## **A Short History of the Ugly Side of Anthropology**

Early ethnographers had been missionaries, bringing the Gospels of Christianity and Economic Development to the "savages" of Africa and Asia (much like their colleagues had already been doing in the

Americas). Others had been explicit harbingers of colonialism, advance reconnaissance men for European land-grabbers. Regardless of which prong of the attack, these ethnographers' reports overflowed with the same racist assumptions about "the natives" as any government or company analysis.

Despite themselves, however, the anthropologists engaged in fieldwork in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century did manage to bring more or less accurate descriptions of primitive cultures to a Euro-American audience (both popular and academic, as well as official). Many were both astonished and embarrassed at what they found (much like the reports of Columbus finding the Taino overly welcoming, and therefore naïve, knowing as he did what he had in store for them): cultures with no state, no centralized or institutionalized mechanisms of social control, no warfare. Yet there was obviously some kind of culture occurring. There was social cohesion based on clearly defined kinship patterns (and a near-universal incest taboo) as well as coherent worldviews based on culturally specific mythology and lore, songs and stories; ceremonies and rituals attached to lifecycle events (rites of passage associated with the attainment of adulthood, childbearing, death and mourning). These savages had culture—they weren't just wandering around doing whatever they felt like; there were plenty of proscriptions as well as duties and obligations. This the ethnographers could not avoid describing.

They were baffled that culture could exist without a complicated system of morality (that is, religion) or a putatively neutral institution for dispensing justice (that is, the State). They were, indeed, facing the fact that human culture could exist quite successfully without both. But as there were anarchists in their home countries promoting exactly that idea of a good life without religion and the state, the ethnographers (loyal missionaries and/or pro-state colonialists) had to devise a new term to capture both their assumptions about what was really going on in primitive culture, and their shock that perhaps these savages were not really all that savage. They created the term *acephalous* (without a head), a reflection of their conviction that no



culture could exist without hierarchy, while grudgingly acknowledging that these were cultures after all.

Finding the actual value for radicals and anarchists in such ethnographies requires a lot of reading between the lines. One must filter out the racism, the assumptions of the positive value of hierarchy and institutionalized social controls, and the pompous self-righteousness of equating cultural sophistication with superior firepower and/or industrial development as well as the existence of capitalism. In addition, there are the filters that the ethnographers put on their own reports, especially when describing the excretory and sexual practices of their subjects; European—especially Victorian—bourgeois morality would just not allow certain things to be talked about frankly in print or in public.

Finding the actual value for anarchists in such ethnographies requires a lot of reading between the lines.

#### **After Man the Hunter**

Once the majority discourse in anthropology shifted toward the gatherer-hunter analysis, and once that became less shocking to the academic establishment, it could be reported that primitive people had a good life. Not only that, but many ethnographers could begin to discuss the egalitarianism of gatherer-hunters relative to class-based societies. While that sounds like a further blow to the pro-hierarchy, pro-state discourse of previous ethnography, it still hides Euro-American cultural assumptions.

To give an example that illustrates this problem, European ethnographers who specialized in studying musical traditions knew that African people did not share the 12-tone scale of European music theory. Therefore they already knew that African folk music would have no harmony, and because they knew all that, when they heard African folk music they heard no harmonies, and could then report with great authority that harmony was unknown in Africa.<sup>4</sup> Anyone today who has listened to early recordings of the same music will find that absurd.

Similarly, when male ethnographers discern egalitarianism among primitive people, it is the egalitarianism that exists between adult men. There is an almost universal gender-based division of labor among primitive people, which fosters and is fostered by a system of fairly strict gender-based segregation of activities, along with their attendant restrictions, duties, and responsibilities. There are only a few cultures where women or children are allowed to participate in hunting, and none that I know of where women are allowed to engage in raiding or other forms of armed combat with neighboring people. Women make women's garments (or all garments); men may occasionally contribute raw or decorative material. Women make baskets

and other implements associated with food gathering and preparation. This is not the kind of egalitarianism that I (and many other anarchists) would appreciate as an anarchist egalitarianism. Indeed, there are many aspects of primitive cultures that should make anarchists pause, from infanticide to self-mutilation, from wife-beating to cannibalism.

By the mid-70s, as the post-Man the Hunter generation of anthropologists entered the academy, and a new school of thought took hold of anthropology. Based in a new generation of academics who were steeped in the leftist ideologies of Cultural Studies, anti-colonialism, and Third World national liberationism, cultural relativism became the majority discourse. Cultural relativism is based on the idea that the customs and characteristics of a particular culture should be judged on their own terms; it is presumptuous, colonialist, and racist for Europeans or Americans to judge any part of another culture, so a new sensitivity to the temptation to ridicule or condemn came to dominate anthropological discourse. To a large degree this remains the dominant discourse among left-liberals in the social sciences.

The problem with cultural relativism is that despite it supposedly being the opposite of the paternalistic and authoritarian ethnography of the previous century, and despite the appearance of tolerance and an automatic acceptance of others, it is in actuality profoundly conservative.<sup>5</sup> It promotes the maintenance of brutality for the sake of anti-racism. Cultural relativists claim that any attempt to curtail or end the practice of clitoridectomy or female infanticide is racist and colonialist. Cultural relativists are complicit in the maintenance of the amputation of knuckles of women whose male relatives have died. Such practices make sense to the people in the cultures who engage in them—how presumptuous to tell them that these aspects of their culture are harmful! Those are the same anti-racists who fight for the right to eat dogs in various Chinatowns in the United States—so what if dogs are companion animals to Americans? That's a culturally specific (Anglo) value of keeping dogs as pets that shouldn't restrict the equally valuable culturally specific (Asian) value of dog meat.

It is interesting that most of the practices that are found to be abhorrent to Europeans and Americans are those inflicted upon women, girls, and animals; Euro-American cultural mythology promotes the protection of those who are supposedly defenseless (like widows, orphans, and [stray] animals). A quandary exists; there is a clash between cultural values, and the history and legacy of colonial domination of the global south by Europeans and Americans can paralyze the humanitarian impulses of many anthropologists. Unfortunately most non-relativist anthropologists, being tied to the academy, are supporters of some kind of state-sponsored intervention when there's a program to eradicate cultural practices they find unsavory.



### What Anthropology Taught Me

Being trained and getting a degree in Cultural Anthropology taught me about the reality—not just the dreamy utopian possibility—of life without the State and other hierarchical institutions and mechanisms of social control (police, courts, prisons). This condition of anarchy<sup>6</sup> reflects the successful adaptation of humans for 99% of our history (that is, the time before the invention of agriculture). This primitive life is not necessarily a place where I would want to live, nor is it recognizable as a deliberately anarchist society; nevertheless, it is a place where there is no State (not even a hint of one), no economy, no widespread environmental devastation, and no war.

Having an education in anthropology definitely helped me to engage critically with the world. It taught me how to read between the lines of academic discourse, how to find the prejudices and assumptions of authors and teachers, and how to make my own arguments. In the process I was able to recognize the strength and durability of mythology,<sup>7</sup> in academia as well as in radical politics. This in turn spurred me on to a desire to reject ideological rigidity in both areas, and is one of the reasons I decided not to go to graduate school. And while the vast majority of my useful education has occurred since my graduation, this process certainly would have been much slower without studying anthropology.

<sup>1</sup> The term *primitive* refers to those cultural groups that have no agriculture, no permanent settlements, no formal institutions of any kind. Gatherer-hunters, pastoralists, and horticulturalists are the groups to which this categorization apply. They are by definition *uncivilized*; they do not reside in cities.

<sup>2</sup> Up to 80% of total caloric intake in the cases of cultural groups living in temperate and tropical environments; people who live above the Arctic Circle, on the other hand, have little access to plant foods, so their diet is almost 100% animal-based from hunting.

<sup>3</sup> By *work* I mean activities that are necessary for survival, such as food gathering and preparation, making utensils, hunting equipment, clothing (when applicable), maintaining shelters, child-rearing, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Folk music* is the music that people play by listening

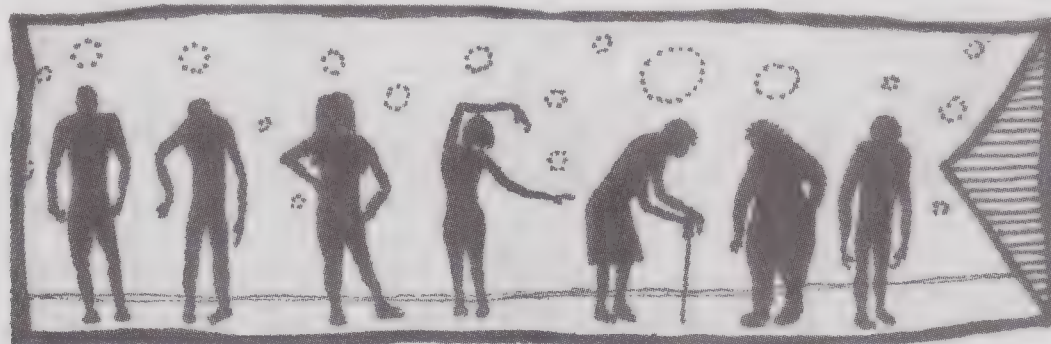
Anthropology helped me to engage critically with the world, to read between the lines of academic discourse, to find the prejudices and assumptions of authors and teachers, and to make my own arguments.

to other folk musicians; more specifically, it is music that is not influenced or taught by musicians who've been trained in music theory. This applies to any culture that has a system of music theory and standardized musical education. The opposite of *folk* is *classical*. The assumption of superiority is inherent in the terminology. Similarly, the term *superstition* is loaded with the same cultural assumptions; the more polite way to describe it is *folk religion*, to distinguish it from a presumed real religion. The hierarchical prejudice is that *folk* is a synonym for unsophisticated or ignorant.

<sup>5</sup> The same is true of the ideology of Political Correctness. Initially a way of talking about non-dominant characteristics in a way that is sensitive to the judgmentalism inherent in the choice of terminology (see footnote 4), PC discourse has become a self-parody of euphemism and obfuscation.

<sup>6</sup> This is not the place to rehearse or explain in any detail the distinction between *anarchy* (a condition of existence without the State and government) and *anarchism* (an ideology that posits that condition as desirable and attainable using anarchist methods).

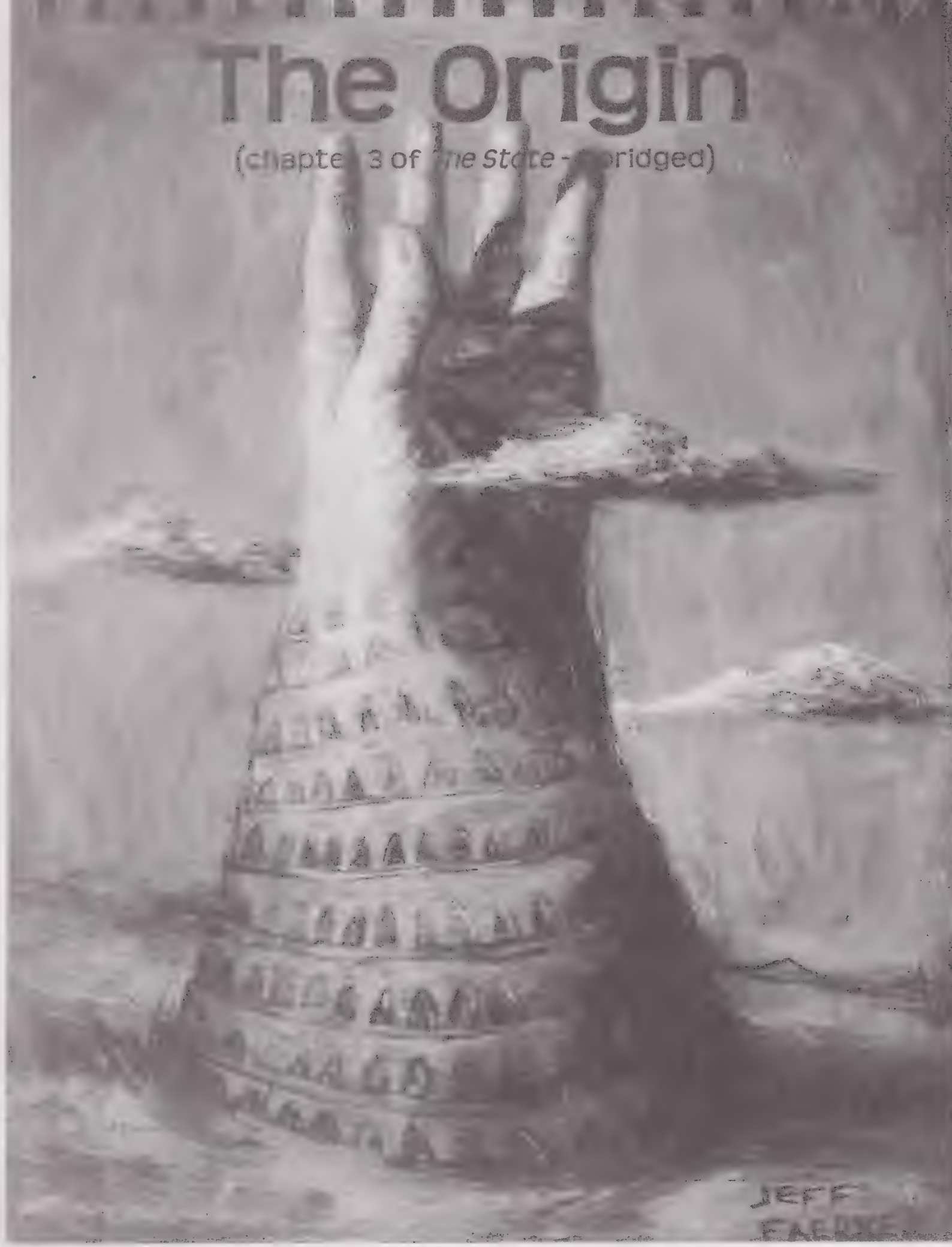
<sup>7</sup> A *myth* is not the same as a lie or a tall tale (although there are definitely aspects of mythology that are absurd or false). Myths explain culturally specific ideas about the world inhabited by members of that culture; they are stories told by those members to other members and they are supposed to (and usually do) make sense within that specific context, so it doesn't matter whether they are objectively true or not. The culturally specific worldview reflected in myths is strengthened by those very myths. In Euro-American culture, myths are shrouded in supposed objectivity (a legacy of the presumptions of Enlightenment thinking—the bulk of which is delightfully mythological), masking the philosophical and ideological assumptions behind them. It is this mixture of philosophy and ideology that makes for the durability of mythology.





# The Origin

(chapter 3 of *The State - bridged*)



JEFF  
FAIRY



# of the State

by Harold Barclay

The seeds of the state have been sown in every human society. Yet only a very few of these seeds have ever come to fruition. Most states have been created by being imposed on a people or as a defensive mechanism to allow for better interaction with an already existent state. It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate how the state emerges primarily as a pristine or autochthonous entity. First let us consider some of these seeds of statism as they appear in what have been called egalitarian and rank type societies and why they do not mature.

## Significant elements of state development

It is important to recognise that any social phenomenon is an emergent from the interaction of a variety of factors. Monocausality is an error and at best a simplistic attempt at explanation. Most of the theories of state origin, some of which will be dealt with below, have sought to reduce the explanation of the state to a single cause, which means they have overlooked the significance of other things.

Ronald Cohen has written: "there is no clear cut or simple set of causal statements that explains the phenomenon of state formation ... The formation of states is a funnel-like progression of interactions in which a variety of pre-state systems responding to different determinants of change are forced by otherwise irresolvable conflicts to choose additional and more complex levels of political hierarchy." Once this is achieved there occurs a convergence of forms towards the early state (142). Pre-state systems are placed on the track towards the state if they have already an existent hierarchy and there are attempts by some elite to achieve and maintain power and domination. When such an attempt is successful one has a state or, put another way, the state is born when an elite can claim for itself a monopoly on the use of violence and can institute legal sanctions. The hierarchy is built upon a number of factors. The significant elements in state development are, then:

1. Population
2. Sedentary settlement
3. Horticulture/agriculture
4. Redistribution
5. Military organisation
6. Secondary significance of kinship
7. Trading
8. Specialised division of labour
9. Individual property and control of resources
10. Hierarchic social order
11. Ideology of superiority/inferiority

## Population

A hunting-gathering band of a few dozen members could never constitute a state simply because it lacks

the necessary manpower and resources. However, earliest Sumerian city-states survived with a few thousand inhabitants. Each was able to do so because it was about the same size as all the other states and they were all eventually consolidated into a single Sumerian state under Sargon I. The Athenian city-state as well had but several thousand inhabitants, but initially it too competed with entities of about the same size. Soon it was forced to form coalitions to deal with external conflicts and, finally, like the Sumerian city-states, it disappeared in an empire.

In modern times it has already been noted that there are a great number of what may be called micro-states. A few of these, too, have less than thirty thousand inhabitants.

To be viable a state must have a certain minimal size and that depends upon the particular social milieu within which it is located. In Medieval Europe a state with a million inhabitants would have been quite effective, other considerations being equal. Today this would be questionable.

Geographic size may be less important than population, although clearly the importance and viability of sovereign states with a bare few square miles are questionable. At the same time the substantial city-state of Singapore with three million people and 239 square miles seems to maneuver reasonably well in the halls of power. It is apparent, however, that the larger the territory one has, the more self-sustaining the economy can be and the potential for resources is likewise greater.

Carniero has argued that population growth is a major impetus for state creation. A people may reside in an area exploiting its agricultural potential, resulting

The seeds of the state have been sown in every human society. Yet only a very few of these seeds have ever come to fruition.

in population increase and demands or pressures for more arable lands. Eventually this provokes aggression and conquest of other areas and peoples and, in order to achieve success in such an enterprise, necessitates armies which are organised by states. Population and conquest are here seen as the two motivations for state creation. But they are in fact only two pieces of a much more complex puzzle. The state does not rise like a phoenix out of an enlarged and predatory population alone. Most of the factors mentioned later in this chapter are ignored.

Researchers believe that humans no doubt understood the process of plant and animal reproduction and growth thousands of years before actually domesticating such



things as wheat, barley, pulses and sheep. As hunter-gatherers they were free of the more arduous tasks which would be associated with cultivation. But population increases would eventually challenge their sources of food. In addition climatic changes occurring at the end of the last Ice Age may have threatened traditionally exploited wild plants and game. Horticulture would have been a reasonable resolution of the situation. There is, however, no reason to believe that in every case there should soon arise an absolute limit to available arable land and a necessity to expand by military aggression. States in Egypt and Sumer did not arise because of pressure for arable land. Early horticultural societies would also have still no little dependence upon gathering and hunting to supplement their supplies. Finally, a sometimes fashionable explanation for the spread of inventions and peoples has been migration. Rather than conquest a people might merely move to a more profitable location: no need for conquest or the state.

### Sedentarism

All states with few exceptions have arisen out of

The state arises when the kin groups yield to it.

sedentary populations. This is clearly so with both the earliest states of the Old and the New World:

Sumeria, Egypt, India, China, Mexico and Peru. The only exceptions to this rule have been those states created by pastoral nomads, such as the Huns and the Mongols and early Turks. These were all, however, secondary states created on the model of already existing states and in response to them. But as far as sedentarism is concerned it is necessary to point out that once these nomads adopted the state they became sedentary. In addition it must be borne in mind that the nomadism of pastoralists is not the nomadism of hunter-gatherers. No hunting-gathering nomad group could ever produce a state, if only because it lacks the adequate resources and infrastructure. Pastoralists, on the other hand, possess great wealth in their herds and in their ancillary, often predatory, activities. They possess, as has been said, a walking larder.

Ibn Khaldun developed a theory of state development based on the proposition that pastoral nomads invade and take over an already decaying city to establish their own new state. But, observe that both the sedentary community and the state already exist independent of any nomads.

Why is sedentarism fundamental to state development? States require some concentration of population wherein there is some specialisation of labour; they require centres for administration and extensive horticulture or agriculture. (Pastoralists engage in a bit of indifferent cultivation, but nearly all of them are dependent upon sedentary farmers for part of their food.)

The most concentrated type of sedentary life is that of the city. In almost all cases, where you find the city you will find the state. Polynesian states and the earliest

Mayans do not seem to have had true cities, but cities seem to be integral elements of states and they are clear signs of civilisation. Not only are they administrative centres, they are industrial and craft centres and important sites for trade. Perhaps a majority of cities have arisen as market places; others have appeared as objects of religious pilgrimage or as capitals of states or military centres. Perhaps sedentarism, and particularly urban life, is so universal in state development because it provides the sense of permanence and stability so important in the wielding of power.

### Horticulture/agriculture

A third minimal requirement for the creation of a state is the cultivation of domesticated plants and primary dependence upon them as a source of food. Again, all of the pristine centres of the state were characterised by the maintenance of large cultivated areas. Initially this was by digging stick and hoe involving large gardens: technically, horticulture. In the Ancient Near East the use of domesticated draft animals—oxen and later donkeys, mules and camels—along with the plough and wheeled vehicles arose almost coterminously with the state. The employment of such power, plus the extensive cultivation of fields, distinguishes agriculture from horticulture. In Mexico and Peru the early states remained dependent upon the latter engaging in very intensive gardening. They also contrasted with the Old World in paying little attention to animal husbandry. In Peru they kept llamas as pack animals and for their wool, while in the Eastern Hemisphere a host of animals were eventually domesticated for meat, milk, wool and draught. Horses and mules pulled chariots which were the formidable tanks of the ancient Eastern states.

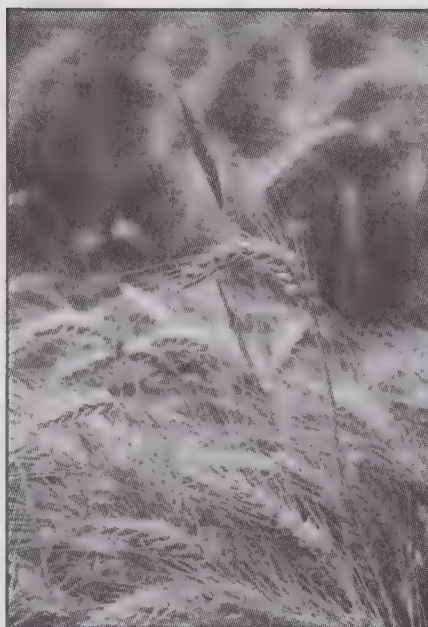
In the East as well pastoralism became an important adjunct specialisation, exploiting the vast non-arable and arid lands. It would appear that with irrigation systems it is not that they demand a centralised, hierarchical control in the form of state management. It is that they require coordination of some kind—a coordination which can be achieved through a variety of different means, but that coordination is most commonly a matter of very local control.

There are several reasons why a complex horticulture or agriculture is fundamental to state development. Early gardening was not much more productive or efficient than gathering and hunting, but as people became more dependent upon domesticated plants and animals, yields increased because of the effort in improving seed and agricultural techniques. Not only did this allow for much larger populations, but it also permitted a few individuals to become specialists in given tasks and not be engaged in the production of their food. What is more, it laid the groundwork for a tiny minority to become a leisure class of administrators and aristocrats.

A dependence upon domesticated plants and animals as well as irrigation greatly enhanced land and livestock values. Particularly once kinship was no longer the basis for having rights to land, some individuals were



able to acquire more land than others. Some became Big Men through their ability to manipulate others, through supernatural powers, through force or their ability to gather a body of clients in large part by making the less successful indebted to them. The Big Men became then the landlords; agriculture reinforced hierarchy. Agriculture also produced peasants—the largest single segment of humanity for the last five thousand years. Although the peasant life is not totally depressing, everyone will agree that it has been characterised by poverty, disease and insecurity. Work as a pejorative was invented with peasantry. Not only does the peasant work long hours, but the labour is back breaking and mostly drudgery. The peasant is continually harassed by his lord. Thousands of years of subservience have sought to train a body of duly obedient servants, necessary ingredients for any state. It has been hypothesised that the slave mentality is further maintained by the fact that the more intelligent and those who do not fully learn subservience in the peasant community are siphoned off by migration to the towns, where any rebellious spirit can be sublimated by other challenges.



### Redistribution

There are three different kinds of economic exchange: reciprocity, redistribution and the market. Reciprocity is universal in human societies and the oldest method of exchange. It is a kind of gift-giving in which one provides a product or a service for another on the, usually implicit, understanding that there will be a return of something of equivalent value in the future by the recipient. Reciprocity may be immediate or delayed. It is quite likely that the immediate reciprocity is widespread among mammal species. For instance horses and apes groom one another. Humans, too, resort to reciprocity of this type, but with their greater mental capability they can readily remember various details which allows them to indulge in delayed reciprocity. George recalls that two years ago Stanley contributed \$100 to the marriage of George's daughter. Now Stanley requires repairs on his house and George is obligated to contribute to the repairs in an equivalent fashion. Even in present day market-dominated society reciprocity survives. Last year my sister sent me a Christmas gift and so I will duly send her one again this year in anticipation that she will do the same. Among other things reciprocity stresses that there are no free gifts. It is also a method of exchange between equals—one does not require some kind of hierarchical arrangement.

Redistribution does require hierarchy, at least in some minimal form. It requires several individuals to assemble some kind of wealth in one location and one person is assigned the responsibility for redistributing this wealth.

Again, as with reciprocity, there is the appearance of gift giving, especially in its simplest expression.

With the Near Eastern archaic states such as Egypt, the pattern of redistribution was more complex. Peasants were expected to deposit part of their crop in a local storehouse. In Egypt a great number of storehouses were created by the state throughout the country and what was not consumed in a locality was sent on to central depositories at the royal court. While in New Guinea and in the Northwest Coast [of North America] the redistribution serviced a general populace, in the Near East it benefited primarily aristocrats, priests and the military, functioning as a means of collecting tribute for their benefit. There, as well, it was the chief type of economic exchange.

For the past several hundred years redistribution has declined in favour of market arrangements. Nevertheless, redistribution persists as the means by which the state acquires its operating funds, in the form of taxation. Modern states extract part of the wealth of every citizen and redistribute it. Part goes to support an enormous bureaucracy, part for a military establishment; another part provides subsidies to wealthy corporations, while, especially in the so-called welfare state, no small amount is diverted to health, welfare and education of the common folk. Thus, we

What is controlled by instinctive ritual among animals is restrained by cultural regulation among humans.

have three different kinds of redistribution systems. One is essentially an elaborate feasting and is extremely close to reciprocity. A second provides for centralised storehouses and siphons the wealth off to a dominant minority, the wealth having been appropriated from the labour of the poor. In the third the state collects taxes from the rich and the poor and recirculates the money to various groups. Until a century ago most of it went to the military and administrative branches of the government, including large sums to a royal family. In recent times more has been returned to the lower echelons, because, one might suggest, governments have learned that it is easier and less expensive in keeping the peace if one can ensure a few crumbs to the hoi polloi.

### Military organisation

Robert Carniero finds the origin of the state in population expansion and conquest. Others have singled out conquest alone as the source of the state. Oppenheimer



saw in the expansion of one group to conquer another the creation of an apparatus aimed at maintaining domination. But the several examples he presents are of social entities which were already states when they commenced expansion. This cuts to the heart of the problem with this monocausal explanation.

All animals engage from time to time in intra-species fights. Yet the deliberate attempt to kill an opponent is more characteristic of humans. Among other animals one or both combatants may be killed by accident, not so much by design or intent, although in cases of overcrowding fights do lead to killing. Ordinarily among animals a losing combatant runs away or performs an instinctive ritual of submission which triggers an inhibiting reaction in the victor so that he no longer continues his aggressive behaviour.

Humans apparently lack any genetically programmed inhibitors that restrain a combatant from killing his opponent. What is controlled by instinctive ritual among animals is restrained by cultural regulation among humans. 'Thou shalt not kill' is a commandment with some degree of validity in every human community. It is not always effective; so it is argued warfare is a natural part of human behaviour.

A war aims at conquest, a warring party seeks to capture and control the lands, wealth and people of another group. The intentions of the feud or raid are much more modest—to even a score, to steal livestock, to abduct women, or, on rare occasions to acquire territory. There are

In its attempt to draw the allegiance of its subjects, the state will try to make it appear that it is a family or larger kinship group to which all belong.

no motives to subdue an opponent or absorb his group. In the feud once a member of one side has been killed or maimed a revenge attack can be expected in which a member of the guilty party will be killed or maimed. On the achievement of this mission the aggressors return home to await retaliation or a proposal for mediation.

The organisation of warfare is vastly more complex than other forms of group hostility. Wars are fought with armies and similar military forces. There are large numbers of men organised according to a chain of command and a division of labour. There are no democratic armies, since there are always some individuals who give orders to others who are expected to obey without question. Occasionally, an army falls into disarray because those at the top cannot agree, but armies are clearly distinguished by the fact that not only do those at the bottom do all the dirty work and face all the danger, but they take all the orders and give none at all. In addition, in a military force the chain of command is quite explicit and obvious to everyone. It is never ambiguous.

In feuding and raiding groups there is invariably no chain of command or, if it does exist, it is a reflection of pre-

established relations among the combatants. There may be deference to a senior kinsman or one who has a reputation as a great warrior. Fighting is often quite individualistic with participants each 'doing his own thing.'

Not only are there commanders and the commanded in warfare, but some of the latter may be assigned to actual fighting, others to providing supplies to the fighters, some to repair materiel, yet others to gathering intelligence, to reconnaissance or to tending the wounded. And in each of these categories there is invariably a further refinement in the division of labour.

Warfare requires at least a few semi or full professionals and, for those who are neither, some kind of minimal training is involved. Warfare depends as well on tactics, that is, the organisation and plans for battle, the deployment of troops and the arrangement of the most efficient way in which to achieve a precise goal. Feuds and raids have no professionals and tactics are minimal.

Because warfare entails the mobilisation of substantial numbers of men and supplies, it demands a complex and large organisation which can mount and maintain it. War technology is very expensive even in ancient times where it took substantial wealth to maintain war horses and their gear or chariots and their teams. This is why it is that true warfare seems only to appear with the advent of the state—a substantial predatory structure with the power to command adequate resources. Further, as we have already said, an army is based on unquestioned obedience to command. Such a condition

can be associated with a kinship relation or with state management. Thus one may say that army discipline means that some kind of state structure has already been instituted since it has nothing to do with kinship. Warfare is also the health of the state as Randolph Bourne said. As all states compete with one another, victory in the competition depends ultimately upon war and the threat of war. Those who advocate a conquest or militarist explanation for state origin are not entirely wrong. Rather than saying warfare and conquest precede the state, I would suggest that the two work in tandem, both evolving together and feeding each other. One thing is certain, and that is in the game of statecraft and international politics no state can expect to achieve importance and prestige unless it does have a good army and pursues the road to dominance.

The seeds for an army and any consequent warfare are to be found in the body of clients that some Big Man at the centre of a complex redistribution system can cajole, deceive and manipulate.

#### **The secondary significance of kinship**

The state is a very jealous god. It cannot tolerate competition. Before the appearance of the state the glue which held society together was kinship. The family and secondary kin groupings were paramount demanding prior obligations over all else. As the elements of state formation achieved increasing pre-eminence, the role of kinship was eclipsed. As Maine argued, with the state,



place of residence overrode kinship ties.

Within a few millennia prior to the emergence of the state in the Near East, or at a time coterminous with that development, numerous fundamental innovations had occurred. Not only had there been the domestication of numerous plants and animals, but animals were employed for draught purposes; yoking and harnessing devices, copper and other metallurgies, pottery, irrigation, the plough, the looms, more sophisticated methods for measurement, writing, among other inventions, all appeared. Manufacturing and using such items required some training. This in turn provoked the rise of specialisation in labour which was also made possible because agriculture had become sufficiently efficient that it could support a minority of the population as nonfood producers. Populations increased and there was a greater movement and mixing of different peoples. Consequently, there came to exist a rather heterogeneous population that was not related by kinship, residing in congested areas like cities. The different occupational specialists had their own interests: conflicts among groups arose which could not be settled by ordinary kinship mechanisms since so many of those involved were unrelated.

Into this situation the state appears to make residence the basis for control. Some Big Man, some pre-eminent, ranking person with adequate resources and clientele marches onto the scene.

It has also been proposed that some people may become so tired from internal fighting that they acquiesce to the rule of a noted and respected mediator, although I have not found any specific case of this in the literature except the one given by Southall in which a non-Alur people invited Alur chiefs to come to judge and rule them. These Alur (who live in East Africa) presumably had "rain-making and conflict resolving powers" (Southall).

One of the main arguments for the state has been an 'integrative' one which largely follows the view that the state is necessary to maintain order in a highly heterogeneous, densely populated situation. But this theory overlooks at least two important points. It ignores the possibility of alternative approaches. For example, all kinds of voluntary organisations exist composed of a variety of different peoples and they all manage to avoid descending into chaos and violence.<sup>1</sup> Even the inculcation of ethical standards acts as a strong restraining force. The vast majority of people do not kill and maim because of the

presence of the police, but because they have been trained that killing is a 'mortal sin'.

The second problem with the integration theory is that it overlooks the ulterior motives of the would-be heads of state. Obviously there are many individuals who are members of parliaments, governors of states, etc., who honestly believe they have a genuine concern for the public welfare. They believe they can use the state to achieve the good life. Consequently some improvements may occur. But in the end their sincere, yet naive, efforts are overridden by obligations to defend the state and enforce the law. Other politicians are clearly more crass, believing that the welfare of General Motors is the public welfare or, like George W. Bush, that the welfare of the oil industry is the public welfare. Ultimately, for all, domination is the name of the game, and in dominating one can produce some degree of integration and order.

Deceptive tricks are important techniques by which the state is enabled to maintain control with a minimum of effort. In its attempt to draw the allegiance of its subjects, the state will try to make it appear that it is a family or larger kinship group to which all belong. Kinship terms are frequently applied to rulers: the king is the father or grandfather, the queen is the mother and fellow citizens are brethren. The state also assumes the traditional functions of the family and clan. In modern times it has taken over the education of the young, the welfare of the needy, the protection of the homestead; it determines the limits to disciplining family members and attempts to manage life in the bedroom. Once, not long ago, the elderly and retired were supported by their kin group; now they depend upon old age pensions from





the government. Increasingly the state has encroached upon and usurped the traditional role of the family and clan. In so doing it promotes a dependence upon the state. Indeed, the old dependence upon the family and other kin groups is transferred to the state. But the state is no loving mother. The more astute heads of state have calculated that it is cheaper in the long run to give the appearance of concern and direct some of the wealth to the common people and avoid otherwise discomforting altercations and revolts.

In many Asian and African states today the kinship network remains a determined competitor to the state. It challenges the state's claim to a monopoly of the use of violence by carrying on blood feuds; those who break the clan's code of honour are killed. But all states are having increasing access to highly sophisticated surveillance devices, transportation and armaments and so seek to suppress such activities. They may, however, be able to employ the kin group as a proper instrument of the state. The state arises when the kin groups yield to it.

### **Trading**

Practically any society engages in some sort of trading activity. It is part of the life of hunting-gathering peoples, whether Inuit in the far North or Australian Aboriginals and Bushmen in the South. And it may be even more important to horticultural and agricultural folk. In earlier societies trading was limited almost exclusively to luxury items. The necessities of life were all locally provided and only materials which were unavailable in the homeland were sought after. Even in Medieval times trade was limited to such things as spices, furs, precious metals, silk, quality horses and the like. Only modern states have come to trade in every conceivable item, and this may reach what appear to be ridiculous degrees, as when Canada exports lumber, pigs and cattle to the United States and the United

There does not appear to have been any primitive communism as dreamed by Marxists.

States exports lumber, pigs and cattle to Canada.

Trading does not occur purely for the purpose of acquiring some goods. It is also an opportunity for making marital arrangements, for establishing diplomatic ties, for mutual planning for war against another group or for consolidating peace. Above all, it is a time for the exchange of ideas. New tools, techniques, medicines, religions, and a host of other practices and ideas, are spread in the trading context. The merchant trader has been a major vehicle for the spread of Islam into the African interior.

Trading entails points of trade—locations where goods are traditionally brought for exchange. These may be redistribution centres under the control of a Big Man, so that as chief trader he is able to enhance his wealth and power. They may also be market centres which eventually come to replace the redistribution system.

Trading activity in such situations provokes a mixing of different peoples. To simplify relations a lingua franca is introduced as is a common 'currency' of some kind. The increasing complexity of trading activity and the greater the value of what is traded promote increasing hierarchical differences. Some individuals are already advantaged and in the competition of trade are able to garner to themselves further advantage so as to become bigger men standing at the threshold of state creation.

Mention has already been made of stateless societies on the borders of giant states themselves engendering a state as a consequence of their proximity to those states and their trading activity with them.

For hundreds of years the Badawin, among other desert nomads, operated a lucrative protection racket controlling trade routes and centres in the Sahara. This created a rather odd quasi-state condition in which the Badawin extracted tribute by force from the caravans and towns, leaving them otherwise to conduct their own affairs. The Badawin themselves maintained a political organisation in which the Big Men—the shaykhs—were first among equals unable to command as monarchs and forced to achieve their ends by influence, manipulation, cajoling and oratory.

### **Property and the control of resources**

The focus of the concept of property is on prior rights to exploit some thing; it is not on the thing directly. If a piece of land or an automobile is the property of Wycliffe, this means Wycliffe may use the property as he pleases within the limits set by law, while Tom, Dick and Harry may not use it without Wycliffe's permission. Wycliffe may drive his car only on any legal road; he may paint it green with black dots; he may even give it no oil so that the engine burns out. But he cannot drive it down the wrong side of the street or use it to run down pedestrians or smash other vehicles. The idea of property reaches far back into antiquity. There does not appear to have been any primitive communism as dreamed by Marxists, although some very basic items may have been thought of as the property of a group, such as land and water. In a hunting-gathering society the territory within which it moves in search of food might be seen as the collective property of the local band. Tools, animals, houses were all individually owned; even among some there was private property of songs or fishing sites.

That some become large landlords and others very small ones or persons driven into landlessness results from a competition in which all do not start out on an equal playing field. It has not been uncommon for individuals to lose their property by the use of overt force by another. Some own land which is less productive; others are less astute and crafty in their business dealings, as others are superior con men. Many a person has lost the homestead through indebtedness and such indebtedness did not arise through laziness or drunkenness as so many conservatives would have it. A few do lose out because of their personal inadequacies. Some landholders are able to ingratiate themselves, or otherwise find



favour with those having greater wealth and power, and extend their holdings. After all, one of the features of the Big Man is the ability to extend largess to his friends and flunkies, thus reinforcing the ties and securing their future support.

In the above discussion I have concentrated upon land because this is the most valuable resource in any agrarian society. Property in other resources has also been important. European colonialism instilled in many peoples new conceptions of property. The North American fur trade taught countless Indians that their trap lines were valuable assets to be protected from outside intruders. Amongst pastoralists livestock is individual property with which one can amass a fortune or descend into abject poverty. Pure luck may determine whether one man is wiped out by epidemic disease while another is able to keep a healthy herd. One loses stock to rustlers, while another is unharmed—he may even be the rustler. Land holdings with copper, gold or timber reserves afford yet further devices for acquiring wealth and power. Clearly property is a most important road to power, possibly the most important road. It is crucial for the elaboration of a redistribution system. Marxist theory identifies property accumulation with the evolution of the state, but since a most central part of the theory concerns class conflict I will reserve discussion of it for the following section on hierarchy.

### **Hierarchic social order**

Redistribution, the division of labour, trading and private property all produce social difference of a more fixed sort. Yet social differences are features of all societies. Australian Aboriginal society granted higher status to the elders of the band; women were inferior to men. A good hunter gained higher repute. Granted this is a simple kind of differentiation, but it lays the basis for more elaborate forms. The differences amongst Australians or most any hunter-gatherer people were considered so minimal that such societies were called egalitarian and compared to most other societies they appeared so.

Rank societies, according to Fried, are those "in which positions of valued status are somehow limited so that not all those of sufficient talent to occupy such statuses actually achieve them. Such a society may or may not be stratified. That is, a society may sharply limit positions of prestige without affecting the access of its entire membership to the basic resources upon which life depends" (Morton Fried, *Evolution of Political Society*, p10).

The political role of redistributors varies considerably. At one pole we have the examples of the Yurok and Northwest Coast Indians who were subjected to diffuse and religious sanctions; their Big Men lacked authority to impose regulations. At the other extreme were some African and Polynesian redistributors who were petty kings, some with great authority... But it is important to bear in mind that it is primarily through the evolution of

a redistribution system that a ranking system becomes established. The redistribution may begin as a feast and



the guests eventually become clients or dependents of the host, obligated to him as a feast sponsor. These obligations are reciprocated by the provision of goods and services to the feasting enterprise, which then becomes larger and more elaborate. The Big Men invent titles for themselves, assume a central role as mediators of disputes, assert supernatural claims, and as a result of their influence and growing status become central figures in trading activities. They are the holders of rank in the community. The redistribution system shifts from elaborate feasting in which there was once an equal distribution of goods to one favouring those with rank. Now the society may be said to be at the threshold of a stratified state, that is, provided that the other factors we have discussed above, along with ideology, have also moved to favour greater stratification as well.

For Fried a "stratified society is one in which members of the same sex and equivalent age status do not have equal access to the basic resources that sustain life" (p186).

I believe stratified societies with only the rarest exceptions would have a state structure. This would be only reasonable and predictable. Once one has an aristocracy all the trappings of government are going to be established by that stratum in order to protect its position and interests. An aristocracy would already have an adequate infrastructure and sufficient resources well in place so that the creation of a state would be like placing the capping stone on a structure. For Marx it is with the appearance of individual private property during 'barbarian' times that we have the commencement of a movement towards the state. For property accumulation means the rise of a propertied class which in turn exploits the non-propertied and makes them ever more dependent and depressed. In order to protect



their interests the propertied create a state and it has served the wealthy throughout history, whether these were large landowners or, in modern times, capitalists. Competing economic classes produce conflict within the society eventually resulting in an open clash of interests. The English Revolution of mid-seventeenth century was a conflict between an old land-owning class and a rising bourgeoisie which eventuated in the triumph of capitalism. This conflict in turn has generated yet another dialectic process pitting capitalists against the proletariat which it is believed will eventually produce a new synthesis in communism.<sup>2</sup>

The Marxists Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst have claimed that with "the primitive and advanced communist modes of production" there is no state because there are no social classes. Such a view ignores the bureaucratic managerial elite as a social class, thus unveiling one of the weaknesses of Marxist analysis. That is, the bureaucrats as non-property holders are not seen as a class and so are unworthy of further consideration. Yet they are, nevertheless, a potent social force which perpetuates the division of society into the powerful and powerless. Such observations are not intended to demonstrate the falsity

Yet if our intellectuals would only look about them they would everywhere see communities banded together by interest in a common ritual.

of a class theory of state origin. Rather it is intended to question the absoluteness and dogmatism with which this theory is sometimes enunciated. Modern world events have demonstrated that a dominant ruling group or 'class' need not be the capitalists or anyone cornering the wealth of society. The technocratic-bureaucratic-military element prevails in much of the world and is fierce competition in the rest. Neither government nor social class (however it might be composed) can be developed to any extent without the other; they must develop in tandem.

Presumably stages in an "evolutionary sequence" should be somehow preparatory for the stages to come. Here the ultimate goal of the process is the achievement of the state, so that the character of any tribal level or stage should be less egalitarian than the band and indicative of more social differences. But such is not the case. Among the cognitive groups mentioned above most of the Polynesians—such as Hawaiians and Tongans—and all of the Amhara and Scots are or were part and parcel of already existing states. For the remaining so-called tribal peoples the egalitarianism of the band is no less in the tribe.

The chiefdom has already been mentioned. Here I would only like to note that as a category it includes an enormous variety of quite different social organisations. In large part this difficulty arises from the fact that the definition of chiefdom centres on redistribution which itself is more of an umbrella term, an issue discussed in the section on Redistribution. The chiefdom category

is made to include Northwest Coast hunter-gatherers carrying on potlatches, New Guinean Big Men sponsoring feasts, and the kings of simple states like ancient Hawaii or the many such entities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Obviously an enormous gulf separates the administration of the king of Bunyoro from the role of a Kwakiutl potlatch sponsor. Be that as it may, redistribution is a major vehicle in pushing a society towards the state. Fried's sequence proceeding from egalitarian to rank and to stratified society derives in a much modified fashion from Morgan, but has fewer pitfalls since it focuses directly on the question of status and at the same time simplifies the sequence of changes. What I suggest is that any stratified society will have the characteristic features delineated in this chapter and it would, therefore, be a state. Further, any society characterised by an elaborate redistribution system in which wealth is siphoned off to a dominant power elite would be a stratified state society.

### Ideology

An ideology is, more broadly, any set of beliefs, explicit or implicit, which acts as a guide for daily living and an explanation of the world. The point is that a society, especially one which is highly specialised and multicultural, may have several, often competing, ideologies. The most popular one is that associated with the dominant group and it will be the one that is preached in its schools, most of its religious edifices and elsewhere.

In materialist theory, which seems so popular today, ideology is a pure epiphenomenon of the basic economic-technological aspects of society; it is a by-product which allows of no causal significance itself. Max Weber, among others, well demonstrated that ideology was indeed a potent force in all social affairs and one to be reckoned with in its own right. Thus, he showed that capitalism was not purely the natural result of ongoing economic processes, but was assisted in its flowering by the presence of a way of thinking, an outlook on life, that he called the Protestant ethic, and is now more commonly referred to by the more secular term, the work ethic.

Essential to the existence of any state is an ideology of superiority/inferiority, of ruler and ruled; that it is only right and proper that persons holding certain offices should be above others and enjoy the legitimate right to compel others to obey them. In societies characterised by the presence of ranks this kind of ideology is not fully developed. There may be a recognition that some individuals are better or superior, but not sufficiently so to be a ruler commanding obedience.

One of the reasons Christianity and Islam have been so successful is because their monotheism appeals to the rulers of states, since the notion of one god reinforces that of a single supreme ruler.

Almost all ideologies are founded in religious belief if they are not complete religious systems themselves. Such beliefs are expressed and reaffirmed by ritual practices. A.M. Hocart stressed the role of ritual in state formation. He goes on to say that to



our intellectuals only economic interests can create anything as solid as the state. Yet if they would only look about them they would everywhere see communities banded together by interest in a common ritual; they would even find that ritual enthusiasm builds more solidly than economic ambitions because ritual involves a rule of life, whereas economics are a rule of gain, and so divide rather than unite (35).

The history of early states clearly demonstrates the immense importance of religious ideology. Pharaoh was a god-king and the temple, the priests, the ritual and myth were integral to the maintenance of the entire state apparatus. Similarly in Sumer, and later Babylon, the temple and the priest provided the ideology identifying the state with divinity. Throughout history little has changed. Even in the United States, presumably a secular state which keeps the church allegedly divorced from the state, religious ideology is invoked to provide the underpinning for the whole structure. God is continually called upon in the halls of Congress; god and mammon are made one in the currency; god and nation are made one in a pledge of allegiance.

While the old Soviet Union and its Communist satellites did not invoke the name of god, they all gave a strong religious ritual bent to their so-called communism. Marx and Engels works were treated like bibles; their enormous portraits like holy icons; their persons like prophets; there were hymns and grand processions. They did not have god, but they had the dialectic.

Everywhere it appears the state must justify itself by reliance upon some extra-human, superhuman power. The ideology gives legitimacy to the state.

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to explain why writing has not been included in the list of essentials for state development. It is indeed difficult to imagine how a state could survive for long without some techniques for recording necessary information. And so it is true that the great majority of states did have access to a writing system, but there are enough which did not to justify excluding it from the list. The Peruvian states, the majority of those in pre-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa, and those in ancient Polynesia all lacked writing.

### Conclusion

The state is an emergent out of the interacting preparatory factors discussed in this chapter. Using another

metaphor one may say that all these factors converge in slightly different ways so that a given society slides down a slippery slope to the state condition. There is a multi-linear evolution wherein in one case there is an intensive elaboration of the redistribution system or, in another,

more emphasis on the military and so on, there are different emphases and different styles and impetuses. Population, sedentarism, agriculture, a complex division of labour, a redistribution system and private property constitute a kind of platform upon which hierarchy and an ideology of superiority/inferiority are built. It might be possible that a society with only a weakly developed hierarchic social order and ideology of superiority/inferiority could avoid the descent



into statehood. This is even more likely where private property is not of major importance. Examples of such a phenomenon are most likely to be found in the acephalous societies of pre-colonial Africa. The moment of state creation occurs when all the factors, however achieved, fall into place. This is so for pristine and secondary states. The latter, despite having the state imposed upon them, would still have had to develop those preparatory characteristics in some minimal fashion in order to maintain a state.

No state would ever develop if there were no drive on the part of at least some individuals to acquire power over others and at the same time a conditioning of a great majority of the populace to submit to the power of the few.

<sup>1</sup> It has been said that if private enterprise cannot properly provide a managed health care, then the state must provide it. But these are not the only alternatives. Individuals can organise their own co-operative health service independent of state or capital

<sup>2</sup> The dialectic is no universal social process. First, there is no reason to believe that every cultural system must resolve its conflicts. Cultures may well persist by riding on their internal conflicts and achieving a kind of dynamic equilibrium through the balanced opposition of the conflicting forces. Even granting eventual resolution of a conflict does not mean it will be a synthesis. The dialectic allows for a variety of explanations because it is so ambiguous. It seems perfectly legitimate to argue that capitalism as an ideology is one thesis which generates an opposing thesis of socialism and the synthesis of the two is fascism (where capitalist private property is retained and socialist governmental control instituted). Finally, in the case of the Marxian dialectic are we to assume that once communism has been achieved there will be no more conflict and so no need for a dialectic process?



# Anarchist Media Review

Reviews this issue are by Aragorn! [A!], Dot Matrix [DM],  
Pablo Cienfuegos (PC), and Sappho Marx (SM).

*Anarchy* does exchanges with all other anarchist and genuinely radical (anti-state, anti-capitalist) periodicals. We will continue to try to review all such periodicals received in future issues.

325

325collective@hush.com  
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The subtitle "Anti-Prison, Insurrection, Autonomy" pretty much sums up the contents of this sizeable publication. There are large portions of the magazine devoted to small news stories with a radical perspective on prison and police news issues. More lengthy articles include news articles on campaigns against prison slavery, London jails, alternative prisons, solidarity with the French Group Direct Action, and torture methods used by Spanish police forces. [A!]

Arson #2  
<http://beatingheartspress.com>  
64 pages, \$3 + postage

This is a nice anti-civilization zine from Australia. It contains reprints from Ward Churchill and Chrystos as well as a long essay from Kevin Tucker "Like Lighting Against a Hollow Limb: Thoughts on Primal Guerrilla Warfare." The writing from the editors is along the line of being pro-indigenous (broadly defined) and pro-insurrection but from what feels like a non-dogmatic place. The letters section is particularly good with really thoughtful correspondence between the editors and a variety of people, with varying perspectives. If you are in Australia and interested in the anti-civilization perspective you should find these people. [A!]

Communicating Vessels #17  
3527 NE 15th Avenue #127,  
Portland OR 97212  
56 pages, donation

This is a fine surrealist publication. This issue is very text heavy with a lengthy article on New Orleans and disaster, some poetry that isn't completely god awful, reviews of the Oresteia Trilogy and *The Life and Times of Tristram Shandy* and a reprint of Jean Malaquais' "Reflections of Hipsterism" that is worth further mention. Reflections is a response to Norman Mailer's "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster." Malaquais erases the thrust of Mailer's racialism by drawing parallels between the Hipster and the counter-cultural in countries with no black population. He further teases out the implications of the lumpen-proletariat and Mailer's romantic idealism to strong effect in about a quarter the text that Mailer

uses in the initial essay. Mailer's essay is not only longer but also more confusing.

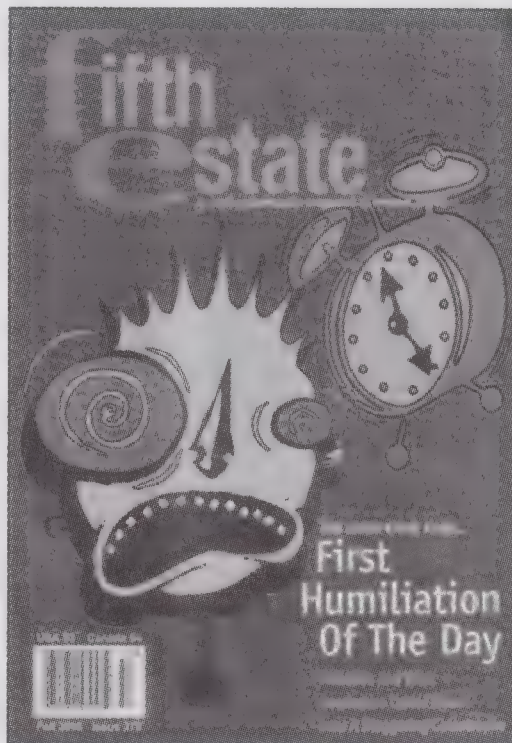
CV demonstrates that there is a literary approach to politics that has much to offer radicals who tend to politicize daily life without particularly referring to it. [A!]

Fifth Estate #370  
Fall 2005  
PO Box 201016  
Ferndale MI 48220  
55 pages \$3

This issue of the venerable magazine (having celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday last year) includes *Academics Under Attack*, a collection of articles about professors at risk of being (or recently) fired for political views, including Ron Sakolsky, Ward Churchill, Adrienne Anderson, and David Graeber, and has some appropriate questions about the relevance of academia to anarchist projects.

Emphasis in this issue is on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Workers of the World (IWW, also known as the Wobblies), and the pieces included do a good job of extolling the best aspects of the Wobbly tradition, including sabotage, music, anti-work sentiment and peer-to-peer interactions, while challenging the workerist and One-Outrageously Gigantic-Union tendencies of the rhetoric.

As someone who helps produce a periodical, I understand the spottiness that is almost an inevitable result of opening the process up to a variety of people. That said, someone needed to take one student by the hand a bit more—for both content and writing—before her article got published. Other sour notes: various typos and missing words, and an embarrassingly, and undeservedly, glowing review of a book that they distribute themselves. [DM]





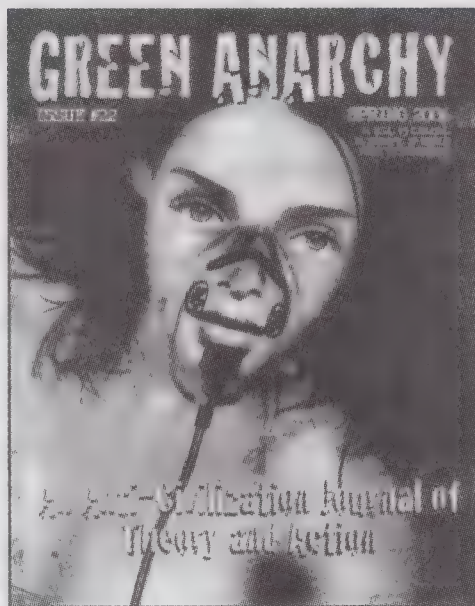
**Fifth Estate #371**  
**Spring 2005**  
**40 pages, \$3**

On first pass I was pretty frustrated with this issue. A quarter of it is devoted to one essay (John Clark's letter from New Orleans) and the look-and-feel is a little rough (as a result of being produced by the TN collective rather than the Detroit collective). But on second pass I enjoyed this issue quite a bit more. The Clark essay is a worthwhile read as a local's sympathetic view on New Orleans after Katrina. The article on children and Ritalin was a good read that transverses the personal-political divide well. Anu Bonobo's article "No Borders: Love, Liberation, & the Internal Revolution" is on transgressing ecumenical anarchy by realizing that the enemy and the revolution are both within. Anu articulates a desire for peace within the milieu by personally practicing conscientious objection. I don't relate to this position but it is fascinating to see it dissected openly.

The review section tackles *Only a Beginning*, *Garden Planet*, *How Nonviolence Protects the State*, *Ecovillage at Ithaca*, *Starlight on the Rails*, *Gothick Institutions*, and the reissue of *Ecology of Freedom* with only the reviews of *How Nonviolence* and *Ecology* not being soft-balls. More interesting is the new segment "Both Sides Now" that allows two sides to the "martial arts is a critical part to resistance" argument space to flesh out their ideas. This first attempt still feels really shallow (being more editorializing than debate) but presenting two conflicting non-dogmatic perspectives is an interesting idea. [A!]

***Green Anarchy, An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action***  
**#22, Spring 2006**  
**POB 11331**  
**Eugene OR 97440**  
**78 pages, \$4 (single)**  
**subscription (5 issues) \$18**

The format of issue 22 of *Green Anarchy* retains what has come to be the magazine's typical style, with engaging pictures and fonts and a very dynamic presentation overall that succeeds in avoiding the staleness of text-heavy presentations but sometimes takes attention away from the actual content. The content is



diverse, including personal stories, theoretical essays, poetry, practical applications, news, reviews, etc. The main topic of the issue is technology but there are also articles on the recent French riots, as well as the recent wave of arrests over ELF and ALF actions.

The first thought that came to me when I found out that theme of this issue was technology was "isn't every *Green Anarchy* issue dedicated to technology?" But after giving it some thought, I concluded that this might be a good opportunity to talk more in depth about this topic, clarify concepts and go into the details of a green-anarchist/anarcho-primitivist critique of technology.

One thing that I have always appreciated about this publication is its willingness to question and criticize many things that others consider sacred or take for granted. It does not shy away from controversial topics or unpopular positions, an attitude that I think is necessary to achieve a constructive radical dialogue. The topic of technology is perhaps a good example, being one of the most divisive amongst anarchists.

At least ten articles in the issue address technology. While each one deals with a different aspect of technology (like its impact on gender, on the environment, its historical development, its future prospects, etc.), I found it hard to distinguish between them all. Moreover, some of the unifying threads that I see in them are problematic.

First of all, most articles seem to use some pretty loose definitions of words like "technology," "modernity," and "civilization." At

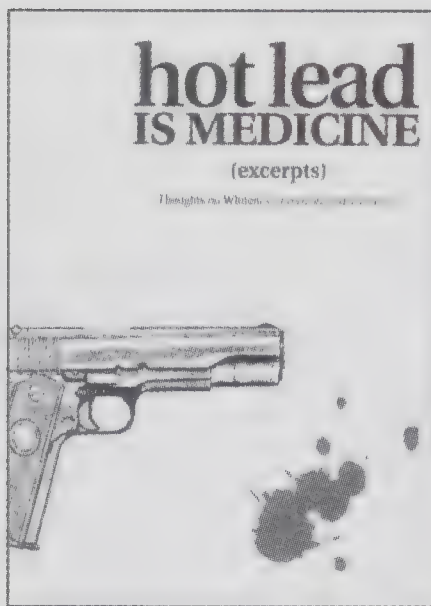
points it seems that the vagueness of these definitions is a useful way to load these terms with everything that is considered bad (death, environmental destruction, social control, war). The authors sometimes seem more interested in having the reader simply associate technology with social control, for example, rather than understand exactly how they are linked.

Another problematic unifying thread in the articles is the personification of technology. Over and over in the magazine there are pointers to technology bearing the responsibility for a number of things. "It makes the rules," "creates the physical, social and psychological playing field in which all forms of dominations function," "elicits and conditions social, political and economic change," "this is exactly what the technological system does." Without a clear definition of technology, these claims are not useful in building a strategy for liberation. Moreover, it seems like the authors make an old mistake, one apparent from Marx's economic determinism to Primitivism's technological determinism—the claim that technology determines history. At the very least, I need a more careful definition of technology and an explanation of how it achieves its alleged goals, to begin to take this claim seriously.

While I find it frustrating that syndicalists are generally unwilling to question technology, I am also bothered by primitivists' insistence on getting rid of it, as if we (the readers) had the power to make such a decision. The end of Kevin Tucker's "Everywhere and Nowhere" essay is particularly offensive. It reminded me of a religious sermon with its promise of a "wholeness we can no longer even contemplate," its categorical split of sides ("[Technology] is a whole package that cannot be taken in parts. There is no good and bad technology"), its appeal to our essential nature ("our bioregional, communal selves still lurk beneath the machinery"), and a conclusion that reeks of moralism with its call for personal responsibility ("it is up to us to pull the plug").

I appreciate the fact that *GA* and its contributors are presenting an interpretation of our current condition, its history and its future possibilities. This is a risky enterprise since it will always be hard to fit all the complexities of this world into a coherent view. Mistakes are bound to be made but there is no other way to engage in a constructive discourse. I only hope that this interpretation doesn't become a rigid ideology that demands more converts. [PC]





**Hack This Zine #1**  
<http://hackthissite.org>  
 40 pages, no price given

This is a well-put-together highly technical hacking zine. Hacking does not actually mean the malicious act of breaking into computers but, more generically, means trying to understand closed (or open) computer systems. Hacking is another term, like anarchy, used in the popular imagination to obscure something far more interesting than the common understanding.

This issue includes both a how-to and a couple of examples of hacking PHP (one of the most popular programming languages), FBI investigations against hackers, UNIX user escalation from the web user, and some more editorial essays on security culture, the police state, the engineering of a better world (!), hacktivism, communication during protests, and the Internet Liberation Front (ILF). The technical aspects of this zine are far more useful than the justifications the authors use to explain them. [A!]

**Hot Lead is Medicine**  
[ashira\\_collective@yahoo.com](mailto:ashira_collective@yahoo.com)  
 20 pages, no price given

This essay embeds some of the most pernicious assumptions within radical politics. In a reversal of former concerns about the revolutionary subject the modern position is to orient politics against so-called privilege.

Privilege has become an existential category as ephemeral as authority or domination but with the added confusion of being something to deconstruct rather than a locus for action.

Framed like a personal exploration through the hard choices of being a consistent radical, *Hot Lead* ends up seeming more like a plea for real experience. In critiquing a prior fascination with black bloc tactics and violence the author states "violence is not part of the white body's direct experience... it is at the exact point of this violence (against wimmin, queers, and poor folk) that, from here on shapes the experience and develops an ontology of Other." It is enough to make you want to kick Foucault's ass.

One last thing ends up being an unintentional (shall we say Freudian) slip on the part of the author. In referring to the frustration of futilely protesting military occupation, the author says "Because fucking something had to be done." Which, given how the author wishes to challenge his male privilege, I found worth a chuckle. [A!]

**The Match #103**  
 Fall 2005  
 PO Box 3012  
 Tucson AZ 85702  
 80 pages, \$3

Fred is one of the few anarchist authors who argues a straight atheist line. While his rationalist, materialist crankiness is tiring, his tirades against the American Atheist organization and fundamentalists and spiritual types never get old.

He is starting to get a bit more of a following in the anarchist world. This issue of *The Match* actually includes two eyewitness accounts to the San Francisco Anarchist Bookfair that sound like chips off of the Woodworth block. The section (formerly called "Freedom Eclipsed") describing outrages by the forces of bureaucracy has been renamed "Evil Empire Notes," which was an ill-advised move but the reporting, writing and tone still shine.

Besides the third of the issue filled with the usual letters section (which has not improved with age) the theme of this issue appears to be John Zerzan. He is mentioned as representing just about every offensive element of anarchism. Fred also reviews the new edition of *Against Civilization* demon-

strating his own humanist, short-sightedness far more than demonstrating the book's place in the "Crap-Detection Department." Fred is the stinky uncle we wish we could visit with once a month instead of once or twice a year. C'est la vie. [A!]

**No Quarter:**  
*an anarchist zine about pirates*  
 4710 Fordham Crescent SE  
 Calgary T2A 2A6 Canada  
 44 pages, \$3

That as to hanging, it is no great hardship, for were it not for that, every cowardly fellow would turn pirate and so unfit the seas, that men of courage must starve.

—Mary Read, pirate

To be an anarchist is to love a pirate. They were anti-work, anti-nation, bingers, sodomites, profligates, democratic lifestyle anarchists: pirates fucked shit up. In the golden age they invented the strike, the mutiny and the black flag. Pirates simplified management hierarchy, elected their captains, replaced wages with cooperative ownership and risk-sharing, and vastly reduced the hours of work since the pirate ship had a crew five times larger than the merchantmen they preyed upon.

But that was then. Now pirates have the best of both worlds. Corporate and state elites fly their own flags, construct their own organizations, create their own cultures and live outside (as well as inside) the law, which they also create. Surely, latter-day pirates such as Cheney, Quattrone, DeLay, Lay, Rigas, Rice and Scrushy are right up there with Edward Teach, Anne Bonny and Captain Morgan (who commodified himself in what Bob Black describes as one of history's greatest plea bargains: flipping his former mateys in return for becoming governor of Jamaica). Plundering, pillaging, committing (ahem) mayhem, they are far more effective pirates than the poor kids of the ELF, ALF, or Cap'n Mayhem's Drunken Boat Crew (really, now) who just get tagged for twenty-year terms.

But about the zine. Good work, David. It's nice and clean and easy to read although a bit text-heavy. My 11-year-old remarked, "There's mostly words." It's well organized with an introduction, interviews, a reprint of Larry Law's Misson story (more on





## No Quarter

an anarchist zine about pirates

But no bottle of rum for this wench; she's a proto-straight-edge, too.

I have to tell you, Dave, that Captain Misson (Mission) reads as fiction and highly utopian fiction at that. It makes no difference whether *Libertalia/Libertatia* (whatever) was written by Johnson, Defoe or another Greek of the same name: it reeks of what-a-wonderful-world-this-would-be from first to last. I'm also suspicious of the notion of radical piratology—reading the pirates as our cultural/historical forebears—for two reasons. One, it's shoddy history. Where we are today and what we do with it has nothing to do with them somehow getting us here or preparing the way for us. Two, it credits the pirates more than their due. Entertaining, instructive, and inspiring

as the (hi)stories of pirates, ranters, bandits, criminals, and anarchists are, the lives and alternatives that flourish in the system's cracks are still produced by the system and offer no way out—no way beyond.

A few quick editing tips for the next one: *its* is possessive, *it's* means "it is." Beer and wine are *fermented*; revolution is *fomented*.

Since the spectacle has neutralized and sanitized pirates for safe consumption by small children, there are many pirate-themed books, tv shows, movies and games on the market today. Here are two of my favorites. Please use them to bridge the gap between this and your planned "revisioning Halloween as a festival of children's liberation" zine:

*Spongebob Squarepants* - The pirate as babysitter. There's a thesis in here for someone.

*Pippi Goes on Board*, Astrid Lindgren (Scholastic Books, Inc. 1960). Anarchist fun for all ages. Pippi reunites with her father, Captain Efraim Longstocking, formerly the Terror of the Sea, now a cannibal king. The reunion is short, though, as Pippi decides to stay in her Swedish home, Villa Villekulla, while her dad returns to his island kingdom. "You know, Papa Efraim," said Pippi, "I think

it's best for a child to have a decent home and not sail around on the sea so much or live in native clay huts—don't you think so too?"

"You're right as always, my daughter," answered Captain Longstocking. "It is certain that you live a more orderly life in Villa Villekulla, and that is probably best for little children."

"Just so," said Pippi. "It's surely best for children to live an orderly life, especially if they can order it themselves." [SM]

***The Phantom Known as Globalization***  
<http://gegenstandpunkt.com>  
 32 pages, no price given

The group that authored this interesting little pamphlet is a German Marxist group called *Gegenstandpunkt* (in English, Counterposition). They are Marxists and hold *Das Kapital* study groups in many German cities and publish a quarterly magazine. In the US we would consider them Anti-State Communists of the all-Marx-all-the-time variety. That said, this pamphlet contains two excellent articles, one an entirely agreeable critique of the anti-globalization movement and the second a critique of the ideology of globalization economics. [A!]

***The Prison Within the Prison***  
 Tarantula 818 SW 3rd Ave.  
 PMB #1237  
 Portland OR 97204  
 40 pages, no price given

As with many lengthy publications about prisons this one is more than a little depressing. It is hard not to feel emotional when the horror of isolation methods and technologies in prison are described. From the science of control technologies and the politics of building prisons based on this science comes the greatest tragedy that humans have ever inflicted upon themselves. Those involved are anathema.

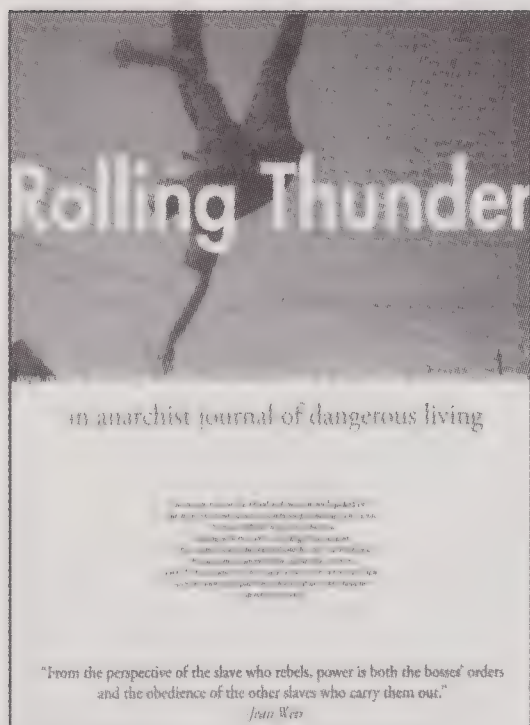
This publication describes this situation in Spain and the resistance to it. It was compiled by the Brighton Anarchist Black Cross and includes a lengthy history of resistance over the past few years. It concludes with several powerful letters from prisoners including a critique of anarchism from the Collective of Libertarian Prisoners of Jaén 2. [A!]

that below), and a comprehensive review section and bibliography. You've certainly done your homework, covering the relevant scholarship and assorted other cultural productions, although you could have touched upon current pirate activities, including radio, audio and video (is this what they mean by the revolutionary potential of the arts?). According to *Pirates & Smugglers* (Moira Butterfield Kingfisher Knowledge 2005), "[piracy] is a growing crime that is increasingly well organized and violent. . . Piracy is a particular problem [sic] in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, India, Nigeria, and the ports and rivers of Brazil." Not to mention Somalia.

Space that was used to promote businesses would have been better used for more pictures, or else left blank.

However, you were unduly harsh on *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I know anarchists who didn't think Johnny Depp put his whole being into the character, but others referred to it as surprisingly good. Anyway, in my opinion Geoffrey Rush more than made up for Depp. My housemate Henry thought the ingénue, Keira Knightley, was a great feminist prototype, "She had a great life, was totally rich and pampered and never worked out, yet there she is kicking ass." Yo ho ho.





**Rolling Thunder #2**  
**PO Box 2133**  
**Greensboro NC 27402**  
**106 pages, \$5**

This issue, the second, of *Rolling Thunder* presents the clearest explication of the Crimethinc ideology yet. At its heart is the idea that dropping out is the solution to an alienated, meaningless, routine life. Dropping out is both social ("it means finding ways to reconnect to others on your own terms") and solitary ("it means ceasing to make purchases"). It is idealistic ("it means challenging the racist structures that make [being white] an advantage") and practical ("it means not fattening the pockets of landlords, but inventing new ways to secure and use space"). The romance of taking action is given form as the leap into a world of the challenging possibility of real revolt. The dream of the alienated having something authentic happen becomes the safe practice of a social milieu and the rhetoric of a dangerous choice that isn't actually made.

Once you get past the ideological hurdles this is a charming publication. It maintains Crimethinc's high visual standards and tells quite a few great stories about unions; the Black Pearl squat; a story about The Guitar; Kazik the Warsaw Ghetto Fighter; New Or-

leans; Jane (the feminist abortion service); two squats in northern Europe, and Phoolan Devi the Bandit Queen. There are also quite a few cultural pieces including a song, a recipe for bread, several descriptions of street games, a crossword puzzle and a few reviews. [A!]

**Social Anarchism #38**  
**2743 Maryland Ave.**  
**Baltimore, MD 21218**  
**96 pages, \$6**

*Social Anarchism* represents the social democrat wing of the North American anarchist scene. Mark Lance writes against consensus and for rational virtue in "Fetishizing Process." Prole Cat argues against the distinction between radicals and workers and for parochialism in "Jack-booted Pigs and Grandma's Apple Pie." Todd Allin Morman expresses a consistent position against the use of violence for social change in "Revolutionary Violence and the Future Anarchist Order." And it goes on and on this way. The problem isn't that these authors do not make good points (these sentence-long descriptions are obviously too brief to be anything but a misrepresentation of them)—they often do—but that the project underlying these articles is opaque. There are a set of positions underlying *Social Anarchism* but if you do not know it you would not know it.

There are some less ideological essays here. Ron Sakolsky has one on "Jayne Cortez and the Poetic of Diasporic Resistance." There is a nice review of Allan Antliff's *Anarchist Modernism* and an interesting critical comparison between Roy Filippo's *A New World in Our Hearts* and the Curious George Brigade's *Anarchy and the Age of Dinosaurs*. [A!]

**Upping the Anti #1**  
**998 Bloor St. West**  
**P.O. Box 10571,**  
**Toronto Ontario M6H 4H9 Canada**  
**120 pages, \$7**

This is an interesting attempt at invigorating an Autonomous Marxist tendency in

North America. The first issue is enormous and feels like a college reader with no images, one column of text, and a spiral binding. The content is very heavy and includes a great interview with Civil Rights activist Grace Lee Boggs (who worked with Malcolm X and CLR James), another with Ward Churchill, a roundtable discussion on 'anti-oppression' politics, several lengthy book reviews (among them *Multitude* and *Undoing Gender*) and several essays. The opening editorial starts this project off on an interesting note with a critique of the language of 'anti' and the resulting orientation of radicals towards reaction rather than critique and struggle.

The central essays articulate the political vision of this project. The first summarizes the politics and usefulness of the Autonomous Marxist position. The second critiques the "diversity of tactics" in mass mobilizations as not developing into "new forms of convergence." The third, "Power to the Sisters and Therefore to the Class," valorizes the autonomous power of the exploited. These are not anarchist perspectives, but offer an insight into the relationship between anti-globalization anarchists and the graduate students they are often seen with. [A!]

**To Work or Not to Work?**  
**Is That the Question?**  
**Quiver**  
**PO Box 993**  
**Santa Cruz CA 95061**  
**36 pages, no price listed**

This is a recent pamphlet by the influential French communist Gilles Duave. His *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement* (as Jean Barrot) has influenced post-left Anarchism to no small degree. The first half of the pamphlet is a history of movements that have asserted the "importance of labour (as the) major obstacle to revolution." The second half is a reflection on the implications of this history onto the revolutionary theory and movement of today. The conclusion is a solid statement against the role of individual radical subjectivity and for a deeper understanding of the objective realities that the communist movement depends on. Not an inspiring conclusion but worthy of reflection (even if we reject the language of communism). [A!]



## Anthropology

*Common hunting, common fishing, and common culture of the orchards or the plantations of fruit trees was the rule...*

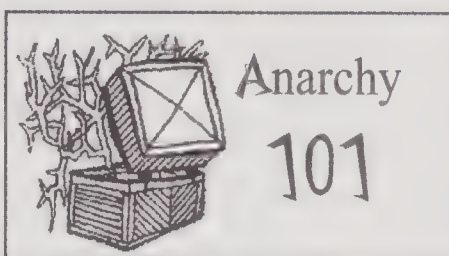
-Kropotkin referring to the Teutonic tribes in *Mutual Aid*

Anarchists have differed from other radicals in their intellectual pursuits. Rather than generally orienting themselves to the study and critique of political economy, anarchists have pursued many ways of understanding human experience.

Prominent among the formal disciplines of understanding human experience is the study of anthropology. Portions of the modern anarchist movement are heavily influenced by the thinking of anthropologists and the rest just don't admit it.

Bakunin in *God and State* uses an anthropological argument about the origin of deism to critique the ideological aspects of "a single Divine Being." Kropotkin devotes an entire chapter of *Mutual Aid* to "Mutual Aid Among the Barbarians" stating "It is not possible to study primitive mankind without being deeply impressed by the sociability it has displayed since its very first steps in life." Elie Reclus (brother to Elisée) wrote an ethnography titled *Primitive Folk*. Even Malatesta in *Anarchy* traces an anthropology from primitive people to the rise of government. These anarchists did not use anthropology to demonstrate that anarchist societies existed prior to history but that the study of the whole of humanity was necessary to understand how we came to the seemingly eternal and fixed concepts that we have regarding God and authority.

Many anarchists now consider anthropology to provide real evidence and no small amount of hope to the idea that humans are capable of organizing themselves and living in anti-authoritarian ways. In addition to anarcho-primitivists who orient their perspective around an analysis of hunter-gatherer society being the longest standing demonstration that anarchy is practical, there are others who speak more broadly (and perhaps, less anthropologically) that the goal of anarcho-primitivism is to "critique(s) the totality of civilization from an anarchist perspective, and



seek(s) to initiate a comprehensive transformation of human life." (John Moore, *Primitivist Primer*)

Outside of anarcho-primitivists there are other anarchists who draw upon anthropology to make their case for anarchy. Bob Black in his essay "The Abolition of Work" uses the work of anthropologists Marshall Sahlins, Peter Burke, and Daniel Bell to support his argument that a society without the State, exchange relations, and work was one dominated by play and freedom. Entire segments of the anarchist and broader anti-authoritarian milieu consider themselves "anti-civilization" in that they agree, per anthropological arguments, that civilization is a distinct phenomenon over the past 10,000 years that represents specific attitudes and divisions between humans and the rest of the world. These include urbanization, tilled agriculture, the mind-body division at the core of Western thought, and warfare. An anti-civilization perspective does not advocate for a particular kind of society (for instance hunter-gatherer or minimal agriculture) but for the addition of civilization to the list of problems including the State and Capitalism to be solved by radicals on the day of days.

As with history or fiction, anthropology provides a way to see humans in a more positive light than the horrors of watching the evening news. Whether it is learning about hunter-gather social structures or watching the films of Godfrey Reggio's *Qatsi* trilogy, the idea of seeing humans in alternative contexts is inspiring. There was a time when humans lived together and on the planet in a totally different way. As a discipline anthropology seems to suit anarchists well because it attempts to interact with other cultures in a respectful and cautious way. Cultural anthro-

pologists live in the communities that they study because they believe that understanding context is both a physical and intellectual exercise.

Notable anarchist anthropologists have included A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Celestin Bougle, Pierre Clastres, and Harold Barclay. Notable anarcho-anthropologically relevant anthropological studies have included Marcel Mauss' *The Gift*, Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, Murray Bookchin's *The Ecology of Freedom*, Clastres' *Society against the State*, Barclay's *People Without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchism*, and the recent book by David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*.

Many anarchists now consider anthropology to provide real evidence to the idea that humans are capable of organizing themselves and living in anti-authoritarian ways.

Beyond just describing an epoch that can be understood as anarchist, anthropology provides concrete knowledge about how such life-ways could be lived today. For many anti-civilization and primitivist anarchists this entails engaging in a practice called rewilding, developed from an analysis of human pre-history and colonized indigenous people's practice, that focuses on relearning a natural, or feral, state through a biocentric evaluation of shelter building, and food and clothing procurement. This practice uses anthropology to inform its understanding of human prehistory and indigenous peoples' practice.

Critics of an anthropological approach often begin from the perspective of such authors as Ward Churchill and Vine Deloria Jr. who argue that anthropologists have been in the 20th century the secular arm of the same genocidal force that priests were in the 18th and 19th. Another criticism is that anarcho-primitivism's analysis of hunter-gather society as being egalitarian is woefully inadequate and results from a particularly optimistic reading of anthropological evidence. Other critics believe that an anarchist argument is weakened, not strengthened, by being associated with an academic discipline (with its institutional biases, vested interest in the status quo, and hair-splitting over



issues that are completely irrelevant to anarchists). Finally is the criticism that the category civilization isn't particularly compelling in the same way as categories that can be more readily associated with particular institutions like the state or capitalism.

As anarchism has grown as the major form of political radicalism over the past 20 years, it has become urgent for anarchists to have a working knowledge of society. Just like a working understanding of the Labor Theory of Value, the knowledge of the impact of cultural, and to a lesser extent linguistic, anthropology is important for an informed anarchist perspective. While it may not be a foregone conclusion that ten thousand years ago humans lived in an egalitarian way it is clear that they lived qualitatively different lives than those today. Teasing out those differences should shape our ability to understand what we are capable of in the future.



Anarchy, Identity, & Madness

[Note: You can hear an oral account of my madness at

Show #8]

Emma Goldman wrote "The individual is the true reality of life. A cosmos in himself, he does not exist for the State, nor for that abstraction called 'society', or the 'nation', which is only a collection of individuals." Participants in Aleister Crowley's Gnostic Mass proclaim "I confess my life one, individual, and eternal that was, and is, and is to come." In the early 1990s I knew nothing of Emma Goldman's anarcho-communism and little of Aleister Crowley's anarcho-fascism\*. I just wanted to know what was going on.

Emma tells us that "All progress has been essentially the unmasking of 'divinity' and 'mystery', or alleged sacred eternal 'truth'." I suppose what

I was attempting to do in 1991 was to discover the truth about the mystery of divinity. Under the guise of solving the Kennedy assassination, learning the true motives for the Iraq war, understanding the implications of quantum theory, discovering whether Goedel's theorem imposed limits on rational thought, I was really on a quest to meet God face to face. For all my interest in Einstein's physical theories, I'd missed his judgment that "To inquire after the meaning or object of one's own existence or of creation generally has always seemed to me absurd from an objective point of view."

From an objective point of view, (does such a point exist?), my own capacity for coherent thought was dissolving into an outburst of absurdity. I had become caught in Goedelian Strange Loops: The only truth is that nothing is true. If this is true, then it is false.

The trick, I believed, to escape a deterministic universe, was to become consistently inconsistent. Yet, I wanted to obey the law.

Not the law that said I had to pay taxes to support militaries to kill innocents. Tolstoy's *Writings on Civil Disobedience and Non-Violence* told me I had to stop paying the taxes, even if it meant imprisonment or death. I was afraid of both. Tolstoy wanted me to obey the law of Christ: Love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul. Love your neighbor as your self. Love your enemy. These imperatives required establishing some form of identification. To wit: Who is God? Who is my neighbor? Who am I? Who is my enemy?

The payoff would be huge. Inscribed on the marble wall in the lobby of CIA headquarters: You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. Pilate's question: What is truth? Crowley's *Book of Lies*: Truth! Truth! Truth! crieth the Lord of the Abyss of Hallucinations. This Abyss is also called "Hell," and "The Many." Its name is "Consciousness," and "The Universe" among men. When nothing makes sense, stop making sense. Same as it ever was. Same as it ever

The peak of madness is to be in love with all of it. To be Nietzsche hugging the horse.

was. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen. "For us who are convinced physicists the distinction between past, present and future has no other meaning

than that of an illusion, though a tenacious one." Einstein. One stone. The Philosopher's Stone. The Key Stone in the

the Arch. Royal Arch Masonry. Arch-angels. Arc of curved Space-Time. The key. A monkey. The Keystone Kops can't enforce the law. Love Is The Law. It's Sunday. My friend Steve (Stephen, first martyr, stoned to death) has asked me to let out his dog three times. He's out with his father to see World War II bomber planes. I've been reading *Catch 22*. To stop bombing the innocents of Italy or Iraq you must prove you're insane. Attempting to prove you're insane proves you're sane. The dog's name is Nicky, St. Nicholas, Santa Claus, Christmas, Christ. Dog spelled backwards is God. Does a dog have the Buddha Nature? I need to let the dog out. It's hot as hell. I don't have the key. The Friday before, I'm in an unfamiliar bathroom at a party, contemplating Zen. I flick on the light and notice the On position is labeled Enlightenment. Next to it is another switch labeled Life (On) and Death (Off). I flick it on and off. Nothing happens. The Enlightenment switch has no label in the Off position. I turn it off. I'm in the dark and can't read any labels. I flick the Life/Death switch on and off. Nothing happens. Behave as though you are dead, thoroughly dead. I am the light of the world. Who is the one who makes the grass green? One stone. One Rock. Iraq. I am a rock. Help him. Who? The bombardier. I am the bombardier. Help him. Who is my neighbor? Who is my enemy? Who am I? Am I a self-stabilizing pattern in an infinitely recursive, self-referential system, self-similar at all levels of scale in an infinite-dimensional matrix? I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together. We all shine on like the moon and the stars and the sun.

The peak of madness is to be in love with all of it. To be Nietzsche hugging the horse. To be George Bush burn-



ing before Moses. I am who I am. To be Aragorn! in a clown suit, holding a lonely old woman's hand. To affirm with Emma Goldman "Love, the strongest and deepest element in all lives, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny." To take Lao Tzu's advice, not a command, to love the world as your self. To forget the perplexing problems of God, neighbor, enemy, self, and admit with Chuang Tzu that there is no self and no awakening from the dream of self: "When we dream we do not know we are dreaming, and in the middle of a dream we interpret a dream within it; not until we wake do we know that we were dreaming. Only at the ultimate awakening shall we know that this is the ultimate dream."

Can you think of a better term for the political philosophy of a man whose libertarian demands exceed those of the American or French Revolutions, yet relegates to slavery those who will not adopt these demands as their own?



### Will we need an army?

Enough of the preliminaries — let's get down to brass tacks. Whenever the question of a total social transformation is raised, the accompanying concerns multiply during every breath taken in response. Anarchists have, by and large, rejected traditional models of Social Revolution *a la* France even as they have not rejected the imagery of the storming of the (metaphorical) Bastille. The question first and foremost would be how exactly would we deal with the military might that currently exists? Do anarchists need to raise an army to stand against the military might of today?

### Means and Ends

Many, if not most, anarchists feel comfortable responding to the more

general question of whether the ends justify the means by stating unequivocally that they do not. Since, given this statement, most scenarios of contestation against forces of repression are going to be under conditions of tension it is safe to assume that many of them will be under terms un-anarchistic. If the ends do not justify the means and the means are evaluated as the mechanisms by which conflict would be waged, this argument does not allow for vigorous conflict. War, by any definition but the most tortured, is not anarchist. Put another way, you cannot make revolution and keep your hands clean. Radical social transformation is, just about, the most authoritarian action ever undertaken. It is pretty hard to make an anarchist case to the contrary.

The two popular approaches today to this question hedge somewhat against this question. The Mass Movement model implies that the radical transformation of society through minority action of scale (whether it be labor groups or the dispossessed) would mitigate the authoritarian reality of imposing social transformation on a docile population. In practice this model uses the language of democracy, and internally democratic (also often representative) structures, to cloak its oppositional and political (as in partisan) nature. If there were a Mass Movement on the scale of even the American resistance to the Vietnam War our generation would see these things in practice. Instead we watch or participate as activists attempt to build a movement, with greater concern to its efficacy in this-world and its size than in its potential structural and political constraints.

The people using the insurrectionary model argue that the decision to make a radical break will happen in a time of crisis and that our task is to encourage the conditions of this crisis. Additionally, they encourage, this corresponds well with anarchist principles like direct action, resisting the state, and "action without measure." If the action that anarchists take already corresponds to our desire, then the fact that it may not result in a radical break is of little consequence. The authoritarian aspects of this break will be shared with everyone who participates on the day-of-days and therefore doesn't have to be examined today.

The means and ends question

As we have forgotten the story of the rebellion within the Army in Vietnam we will not hear the story of the people who have rejected their orders to be stationed in Iraq.

(and particularly the way we answer it) prevents us from asking the hard questions about whether we are being honest with ourselves about either the implications of our personal and political practice or the consequences of those actions into the future.

Possibly the question of an anarchist army should be approached in reference to a few libertarian revolutionary moments. The Russian Revolution was not won with an army; the Bolsheviks filled a power vacuum created by the handling of the German war and missteps of the Provisional Government. The army was only needed to defend the revolution. The Spanish Civil War was not fought by a specifically anarchist army but a coalition of Anarchists, Communists, and Democrats. The Paris Commune was inspired by the militias and rebelling army troops but not by force of arms against the population as much as reaction to the failure of the Franco-Prussian War.

If there is a lesson to draw here it is not so much that there is the need for an anarchist army but a need to be able to communicate with members of the military when morale is low. If the new film *Sir! No Sir!* reminds us of anything it is that members of the military are not unthinking automatons. This should be particularly clear after hearing the stories of the latest Gulf War when tens of thousands of Reserve soldiers gave up their daily lives. As we have forgotten the story of the rebellion within the Army in Vietnam we will not hear the story of the people who have rejected their orders to be stationed in Iraq.

Even if we were to reject the basic canon of modern anarchists that the ends do not justify the means we still would not advocate for an anarchist army. Social struggles of the past have not required such artificial contrivances, the exposure to the forces of repression that such an effort would cause would be incredible, and the paradigm of so-



cial conflict that such a question embeds is archaic. When struggle ensues next it will not look anything like redcoats lining up against bluecoats. It will likely not look like militias holding the line against the forces of counter-revolution. It will likely be a total surprise.

Next time we are going to develop more of the consequences of the means-and-ends conundrum. What use is talking about strategy if we are not willing to act in the world? Can we stand still on a moving train?



Let's make clear to readers that the mission of the Oakland Chapter of the Association of Autonomous Astronauts extends far beyond planting oak trees on the moon. We are not simply tree-hugging lunatics. Our ultimate aim is space exploration in the widest possible sense of the term. We want to pose the question: can any meaningful distinction be made between anarchist and statist conceptions of space? Can anarchists and statist simply agree to disagree on the interpretation of the following excerpt from an editorial by *India Daily's* Technology Team entitled "The scientific interpretation and anatomy of creation, universe, multiverse, Hyperspace and beyond"?:

Our universe is 3D spatial 1D unidirectional time. It is floating in 5D Hyperspace. The Hyperspace overlaps the Physical and parallel universes. The Hyperspace is a quantum vacuum with zero point energy. There are virtual particles of higher dimension that enters our physical universe and disappears all the time. A very advanced extraterrestrial civilization of fourth or ever higher level dominates the Hyperspace. The Hyperspace as well as all

parallel universes are in the process of cyclic formation and destruction. A chilled universe exists below the Hyperspace and other many Hyperspases. This chilled universe has no spatial dimensions, no aspect of quantum physics is valid. The type IV civilization exists in the Hyperspace and their existence is a collective sum of innumerable zero point energy modules. This civilization is trying to escape into the chilled universe where nothing gets destroyed. The only way to that is to recycle the Zero Point Energy (ZPE) Modules through the parallel universes in the Hyperspace. The knowledge and experience gained by the Zero Point Energy Modules finally qualify that unit to escape into the chilled universe which is a place of integrated consciousness.

Should anarchists pay any intention to the speculation and information provided by J. Deardorff, B. Haisch, B. Maccabee, and H.E. Puthoff in their paper "Inflation-theory implications for extraterrestrial visitation"?... Indeed, if the multidimensions underlying superstring and M-brane theory are correct, there could be inhabited universes separated from our own by minute orthogonal distances.

Also, anthropic reasoning has recently been applied to inflation theory, arriving once again at the conclusion that we should find ourselves within an enormously larger galactic civilization. While the We Are Alone solution to Fermi's paradox was once a seemingly valid one, this answer is now incompatible with the infinite universe and random self-sampling assumption consistent with inflation theory...

The first director of the CIA assessed the situation in 1960 as follows:

Behind the scenes, high-ranking Air Force officers are soberly concerned about UFOs. But, through official secrecy and ridicule, many citizens are led to believe the unknown flying objects are nonsense... to hide the facts, the Air Force has silenced its personnel'. The Condon report also added to the problem, since it demonstrated that men of science could simply allege that

witnesses are mistaken or dishonest and they would be believed by most of their colleagues even though they had no evidence to back up their allegations. This in turn led to greater reluctance on the part of witnesses to come forward. As a result, 'the most credible UFO witnesses are often those most reluctant to come forward with a report of the event they have witnessed'...

While some within the halls of power at the (nonexistent) office of *Anarchy: A Journal Of Desire Armed* may debate whether to label Hakim Bey an anarchist, a pedophile, or an asshole, others take considerable interest in his essay "Quantum Mechanics & Chaos Theory Anarchist Meditations on N. Herbert's Quantum Reality: Beyond the New Physics." Here are 5 of the 33 points upon which the Bey meditates:

1. Scientific worldviews or "paradigms" can influence -- or be influenced by -- social reality. Clearly the Ptolemaic universe mirrors theocentric & monarchic structures. The Newtonian/Cartesian/mechanical universe mirrors rationalistic social assumptions, which in turn underlie nationalism, capitalism, communism, etc. As for Relativity Theory, it has only recently begun to reflect -- or be reflected by -- certain social realities. But these relations are still obscure, embedded in multinational conspiracies, the metaphysics of modern banking, international terrorism, & various newly emergent telecommunications-based technologies.

2. Which comes first, scientific paradigm or social structure? For our purpose it seems unnecessary to answer this question--and in any case, perhaps impossible. The relation between them is real, but acts in a manner infinitely more complex than mere cause-&-effect, or even warp-&-weft.

3. Quantum Mechanics (QM), considered as the source of such a paradigm, at first seems to lack any social ramifications or parallels, almost as if its very weirdness deprives it of all connections with "everyday" life or social reality.



However, a few authors (like F. Capra, or Science-Fictioneers like R. Rucker or R. Anton Wilson) have seen Quantum Theory both as a vindication of certain "oriental philosophies" & also as prophetic of certain social changes which might loosely & carelessly be lumped under the heading "Aquarian."

32. Fleshing out the vision of a world somehow based on the mind-boggling perceptions of QM linked with the alien realizations of "oriental wisdom" - a world which lives with ideas such as non-locality, particles which travel backwards in time, alternative universes, randomness at the heart of creation, etc. etc. . . . this is properly the work of Utopian Science Fiction—at this point in history. Perhaps within a few years it will become the province of revolutionaries, artists, philosophers—the unacknowledged legislators of a lawless future -- anarchists of the new paradigm.

33. QM is said to be "complete" — but then so are all scientific systems in their moment of power. QM should by no means be fetishized either by scientists or poets, since Quantum Theory itself may hold the seeds of a paradigm which overthrows even QM. The tao which can be spoken is not the tao; the moment Quantum Theory presents itself as "complete," it must be at once attacked. Chaos theory seems to predict that Quantum Theory will flourish as long as it remains "incomplete," not tied down on any Classical (or even non-Boolean) procrustean beds-metallogical, metalinguistic, essentially unstructured — "free," like reality itself — which is a state not

of Anarchism but of anarchy, even to the very roots of being.

Does any of the above make sense to you? Will comprehension of these excerpts allow earth-bound anarchists to snatch from Enron executives the title "The Smartest Guys in the Room"? One path open to us begins by reading and discussing "Brane Worlds, the Subanthropic Principle and the Undetectability Conjecture" by Beatriz Gato-Rivera. (One of the smartest gals in the room?) Can anarchists determine, within the realm of information space, whether the membrane between sense and nonsense is semi-permeable? Is the line between reality and imagination real or imaginary? Maybe the best approach is to dismiss everything written here as conceptual art. Should we dismiss Emma Goldman as an idiot when she writes "Art is part of a rebellion against the realities of its unfilled desire"? Perhaps, instead, we can create an anarchism expansive enough to derive inspiration from pantheist martyr Giordano Bruno (1548-1600):

Innumerable suns exist; innumerable earths revolve around these suns in a manner similar to the way the seven planets revolve around our sun. Living beings inhabit these worlds.

Let's go outside to meet new friends and play.



## Embarassments to the Anarchist Milieu

*The following event occurred in April, 2006, and was attended by a total of 25 - 50 people over three days. This number included those who were paid to be there.*

### International Anarchist Academics & Activists Conference

Next April, anarchist academics and activists will gather for three days of culture jamming, music, film, art, panel presentations, discussions, lectures, and demonstrations. Whether you are an anarchist or just curious about anarchism, all are welcome to participate. The purpose of the conference is to strengthen connections among anarchists on the streets and in the academy, to sharpen the anarchist critique of the present, to deepen our understanding of the origins and history of anarchism, to stimulate further activism, and to present the anarchist vision to a wider audience. The conference will take place on the campus of Pitzer College, which is the host of Anarchy Archives (<http://anarchyarchives.org>).

The conference will begin with some culture jamming of our own. Students at Pitzer have begun organizing a "Whirl" down the aisles of a local marketing behemoth where we will form a conga line with empty shopping carts and raise awareness about the high cost of low prices. Then, for the next three days there will be continuous live music, films, presentations and discussions. The topics will be as wide ranging and diverse as the anarchist movement itself. If you would like to present a formal paper, make an informal presentation about activist projects, join a panel discussion, or simply soak up all the conference has to offer, please contact Dana Ward as soon as possible. There is no formal deadline or format for proposals, but the earlier you respond, the easier it will be to schedule presentations.



## Have something to say?

### WRITE US

We encourage thoughtful participation in this dialogue, whether you are sympathetic to or critical of anarchist theories and practices. All mailed letters will be printed with the author's name, city and state or country only, unless you specifically state that your address should be used, that only initials should be used, or that you wish to remain completely anonymous. If you e-mail us, we will print your e-mail address unless you ask us not to.

When necessary we will edit letters for redundancy, length, illegibility and/or death threats. (Ellipses in italicized brackets [...] indicate an edit.)

We will *not* edit for typos, and other inaccuracies.

Please limit length to *three* double-spaced, typewritten pages or 1,500 words. Address letters to C.A.L. Press, PO Box 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703 or to [editor@anarchymag.org](mailto:editor@anarchymag.org).

### Roating is Cranky

To the editor,

In 'Anarchy' #60, you reviewed a publication from the (San Francisco) Bay Area Anarchist Council, expressing BAAC's commitment to "efforts...focused on organized, collective resistance to capitalist social realtions by the wage-earning class on the terrain of everyday life -- where we work, where we live, where we shop, and how we get around..."

What BAAC outlines in this



statement is the starting point of any real opposition to the present state of things. It would be a real point of departure from the usual protest ghetto antics that anarchists and their fellow leftists usually engage in. Unfortunately, it's not the reality of what I saw in BAAC during the year and a half that I was a member of our group.

1. BAAC's activity consists of holding an endless series of meetings in which there is no substantial political discussion or debate.

What this means in practical terms is that we weren't a radical political group—a group of people who figure out collectively what we believe in and what we don't believe in, unite around a common perspective, and then act on this common perspective in the larger society around us. We were a group of atomized individuals sitting in a room for two hours, quibbling about our relationships to other hyper-marginalized anti-authoritarian groups. At the end of the politically vacuous two hours we would always agree to do the exact same thing the next time we met. The larger world never appeared on our radar screen.

2. The limitations of this political vacuousness became immediately apparent in the one effort BAAC made to stir up "...organized, collective resistance to capitalist social realtions by the wage-earning class on the terrain of everyday life." BAAC initiated the recent effort to defeat a fare hike, service cuts and intensified exploitation of bus and streetcar operators on MUNI, San Francisco's main public transit system. This action, modelled on similar actions in other parts of the world, especially Italy during the 1970's, was supposed to be a "social strike;" what we hoped for was that MUNI riders would board MUNI conveyances, and MUNI drivers would "look the other way" when these riders didn't pay—a wildcat action where riders and drivers would act together against management and the union.

An effort like this around mass

transit would be an arena of conflict between proletarians and capitalism that hadn't yet been colonized by the left, the left-wing of capital; the pro-wage labor, pro-state, culture of leftist failure that is what passes for an opposition to the existing state of things. It was rich with promise, even down to its practical, anti-market relations feature, where working people collectively seize access to the wealth we produce and share it with each other without using money or commodity exchange relations. Even if this effort didn't defeat the austerity measures, it could have been an opening for a new kind of working class-oriented, anti-capitalist direct action politics.

3. It began as a good effort. But unfortunately our group, in the manner typical of contemporary US anarchists, lacked nerve, backbone and practical solidarity with each another. There was no coherent united vision of what we were trying to do. From an early point the spineless anarchists ceded the political initiative in the MUNI action to the first Leninist-led/culture of leftist failure group that came along to mack on us and our efforts. The predictable result was that the culture of leftist failure crowd, with the anarchists sheepishly trotting along behind them, were unable to catalyze enough widespread and decisive resistance to defeat the austerity measures. They didn't communicate a message that resonated with contemporary working people. The fare on MUNI has now gone up from \$1.25 to \$1.50, the massive service cuts have been implemented, and an increased regimen of exploitation is on the way for MUNI employees.

Most importantly, an arena of potential autonomous working class resistance to ever-increasing exploitation and impoverishment has now been thoroughly colonized by pro-wage labor, pro-state stumblebums, the culture of leftist failure crowd.

In retrospect the BAAC-initiated group Muni Social Strike had the kind of political coherence and cohesion that you find at a keg party an hour after the beer runs out. My experience of contemporary US anarchists, going back 25 years now, is that they are usually capable of some simple autonomic nervous system activity—giving out some leaflets, hanging some posters, being

scenesters at demos—but the larger liberatory social vision they self-indulgently howl about is always absent in their public efforts. This effort was no exception.

4. People who are for real about what they are doing engage in a constant critical re-assessment of the strengths and limits of their efforts. Even this was beyond the reach of the BAAC people. Having proven that they can't ride their bikes without training wheels, and can't relate to the complicated world of people who have to work for a living, Bay Area Anarchist Council and the similar group Anarchist Action have gone back to being a leftist protest ghetto version of the Energizer Bunny, frantically hopping around at any and all left-liberal protest ghetto events, an anarchist tail endlessly wagged by the left-liberal protest ghetto dog.

Being the tail wagged by this smelly old dog does nothing to further opposition to anything fundamental about contemporary life, since 99% of everyone in this society, and virtually 100% of everyone who has to work for a living pays no attention whatsoever to anything that happens at peace marches, rallies at City Hall, anti-globalization events, etc, etc, etc.

By every long-range social indicator the United States is in the process of becoming a potentially highly unstable society. The right kind of intelligent, aggressive action by dedicated people with a for-real level of commitment might make all the difference in the world. The protest ghetto contributes nothing to this; protest ghetto activity is one of the signal empty gestures of life in a democratic society. It has no impact on the economy; it has no impact against the political power of our rulers. It changes nothing, it communicates nothing. It serves as a sort of steam valve to allow slightly discontented citizens to indulge in the illusion that they are dissenting against something. It is almost like a feeble wing of the state. A few broken windows at inane peace demos makes no difference to anyone, other than a few protest ghetto habitues looking for emotionally satisfying protest ghetto experiences. If contemporary US anarchists are going to be anything more than perpetually marginalized subcultural scenesters, the better ones among them are going to have



to go back to the excellent opening words in that BAAC doc and make insights like those the heart of their efforts. Radical social change isn't about wearing German Autonomen Halloween costumes at peace demos and spray-painting a circle around the letter 'a' in the word "liberal." Muni Social Strike's web page is here: <http://www.socialstrike.net/>

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### Anarchy Rocks, even issue 59

Iain McKay's endless tirades in *AJODA* and elsewhere become a bore after awhile, yet he makes the point better than anyone else how severely dogmatic the brand of anarchism he aspires to would be. If we're going to make a better world then politics à la McKay will have to be avoided like the plague. He never fails to show us why. Maybe you should pay the guy a retainer... Bob Black's riposte in 59 was an absolute corker—loved it! In fact there were several pieces in 59 that



went down rather well. Particularly riveting I thought was "The Life and Times" piece. I really was much taken with Jason's detailed history. What is simply beyond comprehension to me is why *Anarchy* is still not essential reading for every radical anarchist who wants something positive. The journal is overflowing with solid inspiration for the asking. Why the likes of McKay are always looking to criticise is way beyond me. If he could only control the red mist that seems to descend around his thought faculties even he would see that the way

forward is most often alluded to within the pages of *AJODA*. Prejudices have to be dropped, an exploration of possibilities needs to be conceded and the McKay's of this world might find something useful to say. Or is that just wishful thinking? Anyway, Jason's feature was illuminating to say the very least. Knowing, then being able to understand where a zine like *AJODA* has come from, evolved if you like, is of fundamental interest/importance to anyone with aspirations of attaining the goal of anarchy. When Jason stresses how significant the publishing of correspondence really is, he echoes, for what it might be worth, my own sentiments exactly. It's an immensely valuable practice, timely constituting a dialogue with readers. So, so important in a world that somehow, one way or another, is always preaching. Any zine ignoring the views of those who read it, and who take the trouble to respond—they don't necessarily need to express agreement or admiration—is basically mirroring the status quo it claims to wish to destroy. And there is obviously nothing revolutionary about that. Far too many publications

refuse to recognise how central letters (and I suppose we have to include e-mails here) can be to providing an unseen or unheard voice with the space to speak up. *Organise* [the periodical of Britain's Anarchist Federation], by the way, is one of the worst for such behaviour. I have argued incessantly for everything received—pro or con, just lucid is all they need to be—to be printed, to no avail. Taking no

notice of readers is an insult, it is cowardly and unhelpful in fostering debate, getting the message out. Top marks to Jason and *AJODA* for acknowledging this. The revelations of *Fifth Estate* wanting to censor correspondence was amazing—unbelievable! How on earth can they (or anyone) refer to themselves as anarchists if advocating (and practicing!) suppression? Thank you Jason for exposing not only *FE*'s attitude on this but hinting at just how widespread these tactics may be. With friends like these... And thanks *AJODA*

for not stooping to that level, despite the inducements. Overall, "Life and Times" is an outstanding contribution, I can scarcely wait for the follow up—great stuff! Another aspect that I can't stand, and which alas, is all too common, and once again where Jason wisely has the finger pointed, is the negative tendency for writers/zines, particularly workerist oriented polemics, to be always harking/looking backwards for their motivation. For these reasons I believe *AJODA* 59 had another huge success with the new segment: Columns. Brilliant! The piece on "Work" was spot on. Hopefully it will bring forth some discussion in future issues—perhaps even a few (some hopes!) words from that arch-workerist himself, Iain McKay... In closing, allow me to say that *AJODA* consistently, unfailingly dispenses the most sensible anarchist reading (and therefore food for thought) that it has been my pleasure to encounter.

Frankie Dee  
Liverpool

### New Friends who Smelled Like Fabric Softener

Anti-Civilization from a Prisoner's View

Wrote in a max-security prison in Minnesota

Anarchy, for the liberation of the humyn mind from the dominion of religion, the liberation of the humyn body from dominion of property, liberation from the shackles and restraints of government. All anarchists are faced with many challenges. The first and arguably more or equally important (or less than) of them is how to open our hearts and minds. So that we might deliberately and conscientiously consider that the domination we wish to end is Civilization.

Those who are truly successful in fostering change are living free in tribe-like equalitarianistic environments. Breathing the air, being in touch with the rain and the smell of nature. Free from the clutches of mass destruction free from the teeth of the vampire called employment. They can wake up late and have ample time.

We can understand that each of us

is born with a certain intrinsic nature. One that we natural bind to the rhythms of the earth. Civilization assimilates us to adapt certain beliefs and are taught to hold specific prejudices (race, food habits, rich, poor, religion, etc) over time we discover new truths (Columbus was a mass murderer, Lincoln killed 30 Lakotas because of a cow lost by a white guy, Washington was a slave owner) and we abandon others. We mix and match, supplement and refine, learn how to continually alter our collection of attitudes principles and anarchist values.

Some of us have abandoned ideology all together. We see no need in any training of thought, our actions are enough to keep us happy on a daily flux of living. Some call them self situationist and other nihilist. I met others who like to be called by the name I met them with. Now even though we can recognize that our belief system changes over time at any given point most of us are likely to believe that our current set of thoughts and opinions are "right" that our convictions (for lack of better words) are well founded, our actions are justified and that we are at heart a good person (or bad) we can rebel from all forms of civilization and tear down the walls of authority. The highest perfection of society found in the union of order and anarchy (Proudhon). Perfection and utopia are impossible but we find our self reflecting on previously a sense of bemusement, it does not occur to us that we may some day be in a full fleg state of survival. What happens when the lights go out (electric). I bet the attitudes people now hold will change, like 911 it didn't take long for people to start assimilating when the so called terrorist was at our down. The Terrorist have been here since day one Washington, Mansoto, Dell, IBM, TVA, GM, Ford government, corporation, etc.

I know that I not going to change anyones mind (even if someone gave me that power I would turn it down) No matter how elegant my argument is ultimately people are going to continue to work, drive, fly, kill, devolp, log, police, separate, etc. The woolies (cops) are going to continue to terrorize class-separated people (not wait for a revolution) change comes from opening our minds and allowing new ideas and



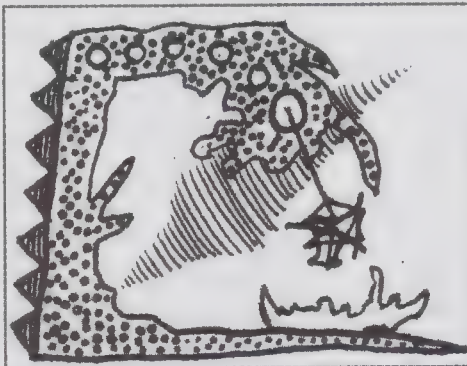
new ways of viewing the world, like destroying it! Dancing on the ruins of clocks and cancer. As you know there is no magical way of doing this. The simplest way we found is Direct Action (A-cell) A person becomes a Anarchist at the point he/her lights the road flare and throws it at (you finish the sentence). Now we must be open and able to keep our mouth shut. I had a problem with this. I thought if I preached than others would set the world on fire. Instead I received lots of new friends that smelled like

fabric softener. In the interest of moving forward from the clutches of the death machine. We may suggest we set aside everything we believe we know and try to find the core of our concerns what is fundamentally important about destroying civilization and being totally free. The rage I feel is in the heart of every political prisoner. The revenge I feel is ever lost child ever victim in slaughterhouses, broken family from addiction, broken dreams because of economics and lifes stolen by slavery and child labor.

Our gulag/prison called civilization is only governed by a few, let's teardown the gun towers, assimilation, religion, production, technology, political parties (who are getting anything done) Our weapons are the smell of rain and walking through grass without shoes. The day to come after the smoke clears we will have a planet that's damaged. In our hopes and dreams Mother Earth will be able to heal herself. We will live equelly with the animals and the trees (some already are). A world without product consumption society. Hunting and gathering and some organic farming will (and is nice) Swal-mart will be gone and so will the future primitive that set it on fire. Hopefully no Eichmans inside you know the perpetrators of the might engines are profit. (Ward Churchill)

After many years of struggling we can see that the left has not got the job done. They've done a lot (thankfully) but we cannot afford to get comfortable with leftism. 10000 years ago we were all anti-civilized anarchist. In the forest, we were hunt-

ing and gathering our tribes then and now egalitarian Free of authority own nothing but having everything. Now our world smells like gas and we have all become plastic. I have come to believe that virtually all actions in the defence of our dying planet are better than no actions (being a slacktivist). Our basic unit of no government is our autonomous self organization, and mutual aid. We are not followers or adherents but accomplices in the crime of freedom. (someone from the Green Anarchy Collective) Let's cut



the confusion and leave with a simple measure by which we judge our own consequences of our actions and evaluate our criticism. Our physical, emotional, psychological bondage is our greatest barrier. I believe no suffering can be a priority, but my justification comes from all the suffering in the world. In essence Anti-civilization can have a desire to decrease the amount of suffering. My message is simply get off our ass and set the world on fire!

My Prison Song  
by Waste, Earth Liberation Prisoner  
I'm sitting in wind --  
being myself again  
One with my mother --  
one with her again  
10000 years - of civilization  
Rekindle the Fire -  
Here Comes the End  
Undomestication --  
undomestication  
Undomestication -- Deep ecology  
I'm hearing the drum-beat with the  
Earth again  
All species Equal --  
Equal in worth again  
Hunting and gathering --  
future primitives  
Undomestication --  
Green Anarchy

Waste  
Minnesota Anarchist Prison Project

## Bob on Our Shame

### A "LETTER TO THE EDITORS":

For its "Democracy" issue, *Anarchy* really got into the spirit of the thing, l'esprit de lois as Montesquieu might say. To publish Mitchell Halberstadt's "Beyond Exclusion" was democratic, literally to a fault. "In the context of anarchy," the only Anarchy was in the context.

1. Worldwide, planetary "sovereignty," we learn, cannot legitimately belong to any human institution (are there divine or extraterrestrial institutions?). So, the implication is that sovereignty can legitimately belong to some less than worldwide institution. That would be the nation-state, which, like Halberstadt, is everything which anarchy is not. Only metaphysically minded statists chatter about sovereignty.

2. Institutions (he further discourses) claiming a life beyond their own, lack legitimacy. After #1, that's superfluous. But the implication is that institutions which do not claim a life of their own do have legitimacy. Including, again, nation-states. I have never heard of an institution which claimed to have a life of its own. I am not aware that the U.S. Government, for example, or the Roman Catholic Church, or even NEFAC has ever made this claim. Only metaphysically minded sociologists chatter about legitimacy.

3. "All this transpires" because of the imperfections of language and cognition. "All this" what? He got something right for once. Imperfections in language and cognition go far toward explaining Halberstadt's imperfections in language and cognition. I'd say "speak for yourself!" but that might only encourage him.

4. "Ideas and time," he reports, "cannot be owned (only shared), unlike things." Ideas can be owned. They can be, and they are, patented, then bought and sold. Time can be owned. It can be, and it is, bought and sold -- traditionally, Marxists and anarchists call sold time "labor power." "Ideas and time create the context in which ownership (of things) can exist." (Not to mention everything else.) This is just so so-

phisticated. Actually, power creates the context in which ownership of ideas, time, and things can exist.

5. "Justice is an implicitly social phenomenon, but no human measure" is adequate to it, so even trying for it is arbitrary, imperfect, illegitimate and "by definition" -- what definition? of what? -- "authoritarian." I agree, screw it. Justice is, however, an explicitly social phenomenon. Which, like democracy, has nothing to do with anarchy. But later, Halberstadt arbitrarily, imperfectly, etc. inserts into his inchoate notion of democracy, justice-jargon like "due process" and rights. For it is written: "The worse the society, the more law there will be. In Hell there will be nothing but law, and due process will be meticulously observed" (Grant Gilmore).

6. Shared consciousness (or affect), the sense of togetherness, is "crucial to legitimate community" -- still no clue what legitimate means -- "the experience of existence as a shared reality," blah blah. It's also crucial to illegitimate community -- the great Nazi rallies at Nuremburg, the Two Minutes Hate, "the wave" in the stands at pro baseball games, etc. Ideologies like Platformism, Fascism, Zionism, conservatism, Maoism, Catholicism, feminism, nationalism, democracy, etc. combine community with exclusivity. You can't have one without the other. "Blood and soil" and "Workers of the world, unite!" are more the same than different -- for anarchy.

7. "It should be possible," prays our pietist, "for individuals to organize themselves and to act together spontaneously on an ad-hoc basis (as in a barn-raising or the Internet)," etc. Well then, must be it is possible, no "should" about it, since anything actual must be possible. But what's ad hoc about the Internet, whose origin was not spontaneous -- the Pentagon invented it -- and which will obviously endure as long as cybertech society? Does this guy even read what he writes? Should we? Barn-raising are ad hoc but also not spontaneous. So what? So were lynchings ("persons of color"-raisings). What do any of these institutions have to do with the "structures and processes" attributed, short pages later -- short, but they seemed so long -- to an abstract, atemporal, idealized, undefined "democracy"? He needs a



definition. Here's one, from Karl Kraus: "Democracy is the right to be everyone's slave."

Halberstadt never says what democracy is, only implying that it's the best thing since (organic, whole-grain) sliced bread. The closest he gets is to equate, whimsically, democracy with being nice to people. He does not distinguish between direct and representative democracy, or between democracy as a state form – what it really is – and democracy as some sort of decision-making process. The Electoral College, or the College of Cardinals, or a Microsoft stockholders meeting, or the latest North Korean (or Iraqi) election – democracy? Your guess is as good as mine, and better than Halberstadt's.

Democracies – here he has to be referring to electoral statism – "have a peculiar, unique propensity to evolve toward a viable condition of anarchy." Peculiar indeed. That undoubtedly explains why the anarchist Cheney Administration forces democracy at gunpoint on Iraqis, Afghans and who knows who's next. Notice that I do not place the word "democracy" in ironic, post-modernist quotation marks – because that really is democracy. The very notion of directional, progressive political evolution through democracy toward anarchy is so absurd that it's not even funny. After 200 years, we should be just about there. But as Bay Area lesbian militant Gertrude Stein observed, there is no there there.

What's with this preoccupation with inclusion and exclusion? Anarchy excludes statism, capitalism and much, much more. The ideology that goes "Beyond Exclusion" is totalitarianism. That, not anarchy, is democracy's peculiar, unique propensity, if it has one. Anarchy is qualitative – and anarchy is a qualitative break with – the reign of quantity, the reign of terror, "the right to be everyone's slave": with Democracy.

Bob Black

3500 Main St., Suite 130-132

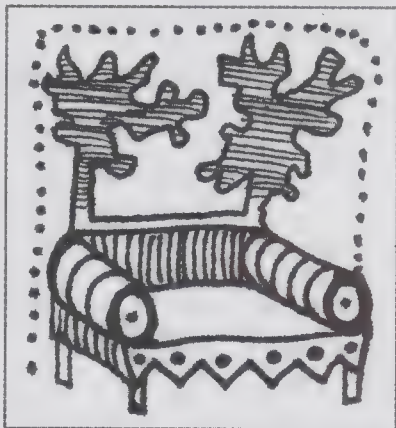
Amherst, NY 14226

Abobob51@peoplepc.com

## Participatory Democracy Communist

Dear Comrades:

A friend of mine told me I'd really like this quarterly, so I thought I'd see if you would send me a sample copy of *Anarchy*. I'm a bisexual woman in politics and



a communist. I've been trying to get everyone I know involved in the movement for "participatory democracy," with some success, though it's been mostly depressing. That probably has a lot to do with the resistance and indifference I get from my friends and family. I have got through to some though. It's just a matter of explaining historical materialism, in my opinion, and that our conception of human nature is determined by the establishment we live under. In this society, everyone from the President all the way down to the manager at McDonald's is consistently co-opted incrementally from above. Our congressmen are not "representatives" of the people—they are mediators! (Or, shall we say, a shield thrown up against Change.) Victorian "civilization" is a racket! It does nothing but generate competition. But the way I see it, no country that does not exploit its own people or the environment could ever survive the capitalist market between nations. That would explain why things like racism, meat-eating, and gender roles are global phenomena. The fact is, if women had been paid for raising children for thousands of years, there would be no such thing as "masculinity" or "femininity" and couples wouldn't get married, or

jealous either! There could be no more important job than caregiving. But as long as we accept an entrenched establishment, we will continue to be manipulated along these lines. And our social relations will be defined by scarcity. I mean, Freud made it clear that if our parents had been sexually playful with us, and we lived in a more "humanist" society, we might not even need sex. Or sleep! But stress convinces a healthy body that it has to reproduce more often to replenish the species' numbers, and the patriarchal State needs a large pool of workers to choose from to exploit. Who wants it anymore? And does shared pleasure not make us civil? As my capacity to imagine a higher freedom and happiness expands, the present becomes more intolerable. Maybe I should join the UN Peace Force. I certainly don't want a bunch of white, fundamentalist men running around with guns when the shit comes down. But I'm also aware that to quit my job would be to betray not only my constituents but myself.

Our rulers need me where I am. It's only a matter of time until the Pleindians order the Jewish masons to overthrow the this Sirian-Reticulum-Saturnian regime. The 360 degree circle is surely a lie. There are not 12 signs of the zodiac but 16 as the psychologist Carl Jung insisted. That also means, then, that there are not 7 but 9 seals in revolution. I just wish that more people would live in conflict with themselves, as Africans so often do, as a matter of principle! Most of my free time I spend doing research or writing my theories down in all the book or journals I get (along with a list of libertarian parties, suggested reading, listening, etc.) and circulating them among the men here at work. But it never ceases to amaze me how easily they fall back on the "abortion and homosexuality are wrong/the races shouldn't mix" defense. It reminds me of an old aboriginal saying: "If they are our brothers, why can't we eat them?" But the bourgeois family obviously has a lot to do with it, to say nothing of male circumcision or reactionary propaganda. The question is, will YHWH nevertheless fulfill her covenant? After reading the *5th Sacred Thing* I can see why Starhawk has been designated as the "new age

christ." I'm sure that under genuine socialism people will gather into group marriages instinctively, probably along the lines of personality. (I'm an INTP.) Anyway, I assume you realize that activists make good saleswomen. I've heard a lot of good things about your journal, so I would truly appreciate a copy of *Anarchy*. But please let me know if you have a low-income rate for student subscriptions. Thank you so much!

For universal citizenship

J.S.

Rt. 1, Box 150-77135

Tennessee Colony, TX 75884

P.S. I'm always looking for like minded individuals and organizations too, so you may post, print, edit or distribute this letter or my name and address as you see fit!

## Booth on Conner

11th May 2005

Dear *AJODA*,

It is a great shame that Paul Rogers, aka 'John Conner', [*AJODA* issue 59 p 71] does both the radical movement, and his ever diminishing troupe of readers a disservice, when he pretends the hazardous political effluent he discharges can ever offer anything but - schizophrenia, futility, despair, hypocrisy, moral annihilation, misery, or isolation to its practitioners. Paul's 'Rejectionist' paradigm only brings negative outcomes. We can understand Paul's attitude, for he knows that the Legions of the Dispossessed are hardly queuing up to buy his paper, nor his ideology, and yet over the years he has sunk so much personal energy and commitment into it. He can hardly declare his own ideology bankrupt and ineffective. Nevertheless, this is the truth about it.

In retrospect, we see now that the Rogerian paradigm ran its full course by the mid 1990s, as Saxxon said during the Gandalf trial. Poor Mr Conner still squitters on, courageously crepitating down anathemas from his secure pseudonymous Monomarks sanctuary, a decade or more after he should've packed it in. He has seen everything, but learned nothing. He demonstrates no ability to engage with



## letters

the criticisms made in the pamphlet 'Primitivism: An Illusion With No Future', nor any real capacity to analyse our changed situation, he can only cling to his rigid dogmatic Primitivist straightjacket. His inflexible ideological model is harmful to its practitioners and to those near to them. Without the needlessly malign internecine bootprint of Rogers' 'Old and Worst' bruising radicalism's ankles, we would all be so much further on. To myself, Paul ascribes insincerity and liberalism, but none of what he writes meets what I really think, nor the way I believe we need to work in the present and the future. I can only repeat that I find this is a matter for regret.

Stephen Booth

### Free Anarchy

How are you going to call yourself an anarchist organization that makes you subscribe and pay for? Wouldn't the best policy be to make donations would be greatly appreciated... then the people who don't have money can still learn of anarchy... and the people with can donate charitably if need be... if you got *anarchy* more accessible to the public then more people would learn and understand...

leejon700@hotmail.com

### Sex Isn't So Bad

fuck the flag, fuck glory--it all adds up to death for oil. and while im at it--fuck george bush, too. and every whimpering flag-waving asshole whos ever bought a lie from this nation.

mrgeezerman@yahoo.com

### Making Her Point

So which is it? Women are dumb. Women can't write. Women have nothing to say. Women are not allowed in your club...do you even NOTICE that you only publish men? Look at your front page. NEWSFLASH - MORE THAN HALF THE POPULATION IS

FEMALE. So, why is it you cannot even publish 1/10th women writers? Hmmm? I CALL YOUR SEXIST BULLSHIT OUT!!! FUCK YOU!

From a feminist anarchist woman journalist who knows you are full of shit due to your blatant misogyny.

Kirsten Anderberg  
kirstena@resist.ca

### The Review They Wanted

Dear Anarchy:

In response to Dot Matrix' Fall/Winter 05-06 review of *Passion Fruit*, I first want to describe some of the content of the compilation, as this was left out of the review.

*Passion Fruit* is a compilation of anti-authoritarian writings on respectful relationships and the "games" these writers love to play!

Combining polyamory, radical intimacy, radical touch, anarchy and games in one tent *Passion Fruit* is a provocative 84-page anthology.

The explorations in *Passion Fruit* break down barriers between lover and friend. In "The History of Consensual Games in St. Louis" Mark Berry explains the evolution of sensual games in St. Louis. "Connecting Intimately" explores radical touch in a supportive and loving environment.

In "Body Image Oppression" Applecore discusses the relationship between patriarchy, racism and body image while encouraging some healing exercises. Michelle O'Brien traces the history of her political projects while elucidating her struggle with coming out as trans, using BDSM as the vehicle in the work "What turns me on? What am I fighting for?". In "Delightful Bootygrabbing" Blues musician Sharon Foehner relates the art of respectful bootygrabbing.

*Passion Fruit* moves from theory to practice. In "Surrealists on Games" surrealists examine the importance of games in connecting soul to soul with others and yourself. "Anarchist Spin the Bottle" is the old favorite mixed with questions on sexuality, gender, radical politics and history.

Keep yer lip balm ready! We declare the new era of polysmoochery, a specialization of polyamory! "Pet-

ting Life Right Behind the Ears: Erotic Liberation Letters games" where participants were encouraged to free their spontaneous erotic energies by expressing their feelings in creative collages and intimate letters with "slut buddies." In "Twisted Twister" loverboy Art spins the 50s game into a greater naughty contact sport. In "Space Fill Game" art introduces a game where participants admire and entwine each other's bodies in a spontaneous game body contact game. In "Origami Naughty Dice" Eustacia has designed DIY origami folding dice where you roll the dice and follow their combined suggestion. Gretchen explore Slumber Party games in her piece on that childhood activity now adapted for adults.

Is sex overemphasized in our culture? Well, not really. Sex is overexploited in our culture. In response, should we back off and be non-sexual beings, or should we create some different sex-positive culture? Many of the games in *Passion Fruit* were intended to create sensuality, which can be mistaken for sexuality, in a positive environment. Most people have numerous cultural wounds around our bodies, and *Passion Fruit* seeks to bring those into discussion and create ways to interact that help us heal those wounds. Our methods have been useful to some, and are not useful to others- so please, use with caution, but don't be too cautious or you might not get surprised by the beauty of life!

In *Passion Fruit*, we emphasize the consensual game which is "a voluntary experience set up to create a playful new situation intended to encourage intimate expressions and explorations." This is the major focus of *Passion Fruit*, not sexuality. All of the games and writings deal with sensuality and some touch on sex, but none have sex as the goal. The questions in *Anarchist Spin the Bottle* delve into sex. And *Strip Twister* may push you in a certain direction. All other games are sensual set in the context of intimacy.

As far as the images in *Passion Fruit* are concerned, where you see a party full of strangers, I see smiling people full of love expressing themselves and loving their bodies.

I agree that we emphasize in this zine, in order to maximize trust and minimize discomfort, cautioning everyone on the games before they participate to make sure they consent

so that they can opt out if not. But there is still room for spontaneity. These games incorporate another approach to consent in their unpredictable results: And some may or may not like this, but in these games people may find themselves in unexpected situations that push their boundaries. If you know of different approaches, please respond.

thanks,  
mark berry and detritivore art

### Thought Provoking

It's ironic how eager we are to slap labels on ourselves; how we rush for any chance to embrace an ideology, a name, a way of thought; and yet to still consider ourselves independent thinkers free from the trappings of a personally chosen brand.

It has always been my view that anarchy is, at its core, a philosophy of independence -- which negates the basic tenet that anarchism is an anti-system. It is inherent illogical to refuse all positions, because that in itself is to take a position, much as agnosticism is a position that is neither for nor against the existence of god. Silence is a response. I don't know is an answer. Emptiness is mass.

While I respect the ideals of anarchism, true anarchism is not something the human can embrace. At heart, I believe in the principles of anarchy, but in a pure sense, principles and ideology are strictly taboo within anarchism. In the stew of semantics and thought, any anti-system is rendered impossible because language needs to be defined by words; world views need to be based upon experience. You could not have "anarchy" without "archy." It is an entity defined by what it is against as much as by what it is for. That, inherently, makes it a system. I'll leave behind the implications of anarchism's practicality. Whether it could or could not work in human terms is not the point I'm making. Rather, I'm intrigued by your vision of a world built around cooperation that does not espouse interdependence. I don't see how it could happen; especially when you use your magazine as a rallying cry to do what under popular, conventional thought would be called drumming up support for your



cause. You need others; you need a hierarchy simply to function. Without a system of editors and writers and artists and publishers and subscribers and newsstand buyers, your magazine would never, could never be; much less be one of computer-built pages and four-color covers that comes out on a schedule.

The reason I write you is not to criticize your publication, which I really believe offers an exceedingly refreshing, cogent thought-provoking depiction of a drastically misunderstood philosophy.

Rather, I write this as a warning not to fall in love with yourself; to not see yourselves as more than you are, a group with a cause. A group of individuals, perhaps, but a group nevertheless. One with a purpose, a philosophy and a position. If you had no position to purport, you would have no need to be in print.

Embrace your position but beware of where it leads.

Scott Morgan,  
Bordentown, NJ

PS Thank you (very sincerely) for actually provoking my thought.

## Unclear on the Concept

My name is Melissa I am a production assistant for the Jerry Springer Show. We are looking for white nationalists/supremacists or anarchists to come on the show and express their views and opinions for a special show hosted by Steve Wilkos. The show is taking on a different spin and we think this topic would be a great addition. If anyone is interested we'd fly them out and pay for an all-inclusive trip to Chicago.

We cover:

- \*round-trip airfare
- \*hotel accommodations
- \*all food
- \*cigarettes
- \*Professional Hair Styling and Make-up
- \*Limo service to and from airport in CHICAGO!
- \*entertainment

Please let me know if anyone is interested. We can fly out multiple

guests also, we'd love to bring a family out. The show dates are Monday 3/13 - Wednesday 3/15  
Call Melissa ASAP @ toll free 1.888.264.5368  
email: jsproducer5@aol.com  
fax: 312.321.5353

Lawrence responds:

*Wary of a set-up, and not wanting to be part of a deranged spectacle (with the expectation of a physical confrontation), we ignored this bizarre invitation. We can only hope that other self-respecting anarchists did as well. But you never know, what with the lure of free smokes...*

This section is from the messageboard at <http://anarchymag.org>. We will occasionally excerpt interesting interactions here.

Excerpted  
as of 4/10/06

MaRK:

Re:NEA review

I would be embarrassed to print a review like this. It is not an honest critique, it is just sectarian snottiness, and not even especially clever or interesting in its attacks... oh, I mean in the "critical and non-ideological questions" it presents to the reader. Aside from its tired predictability, there are a few points raised that I will address.

*NEA, the main mouthpiece of the neo-Platformist Northeastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (NEFAC)...*

I don't know what a "neo-platformist" is exactly. Just seems like a sloppy way to smear our politics... without actually bothering to formulate any sort of critique of substance. Y'know, kind of like when people refer to *AJODA* as the main mouthpiece for the "anti-organizationalists" or "the so-called post-left". Lame. I would call it self-referential (in terms of the obvious target audience being limited to other current and potential members of NEFAC and its various knock-offs)

No shit. It's called having a readership. An audience that is sympathetic, or at least open, to the ideas presented within your publication. What's the problem?

*Leaving aside the creepy ironic quotation marks (why does MJ think that de Cleyre's essays aren't really anarchist?), faulting a writer who either doesn't share or doesn't mention your ideas of specific strategies on how to struggle is a cheap rhetorical trick better suited to unapologetic authoritarians and manipulators.*

I believe the point he was making is that just because a piece of writing is "anarchist" doesn't mean it is always especially relevant. I don't think he was questioning de Cleyre's credentials as an anarchist. You'd think a writer like Lawrence would have a better grasp of the various ways a set of quotation marks can be used. Whatever. The goal of our magazine is to explore theory and strategy and develop our practice. Why not hold up a book of dated writings to a criticism that they are not especially relevant to the struggles of today?

Much like the author of this particular essay, I was an active anarchist throughout the 1990s, and wholeheartedly stand behind the statement that the late '90s was a depressing period marked by decline and retreat. Kind of like the current period of decline and retreat the anarchist milieu is experiencing. It was an opinionated statement, you don't have to agree with it.

*I don't know why the growth of these projects would be depressing for him.*

Oh, oh... here's a question: where are these projects today? Defunct? Exactly where they were ten years ago? What lasting contribution have they made to the development of anarchist praxis in North America?

*One is forced to wonder about whether Phebus ever heard of the Stop the City demos in London, which inspired Critical Mass as well as Reclaim the Streets, events and actions that directly inspired what happened in Seattle. The (in)famous Eugene anarchists had had two annual demonstrations in*

*July to coincide with the RTS in London and other anti-globalization events around the world prior to the Battle for Seattle*

Oh wait, better yet, how about the anti-MAI actions that took place in Montreal where the model for the blockading the delegates out of the Seattle meetings directly came from? Huh, wonder if he ever heard of that?

*Phebus says that "anarchism was immediately thrust to the forefront of this new mass movement based around the struggle against globalization," clearly missing the part that anarchists had played in events leading up to Seattle, both in the US and abroad.*

Yeah, I dunno. Phebus used to edit for A-Infos around that time. I am gonna guess he must've run across at least a few reports regarding the role anarchists played in various anti-globalization struggles. Unfortunately, the way the world works is that until this happened in the United States, the global media (as opposed to the local media of various countries) largely ignored the anarchist element.

*Phebus' essay continues with a history of NEFAC rather than any sort of critical appraisal, merely recounting various efforts and projects.*

I dunno, seemed critical to me. There was a lot of talk of failures and re-assessment of strategy and tactics, areas we need to improve, etc. What exactly does critical appraisal mean to you?

*These are strategic questions asked by every leftist minority political group/party that aims to influence some vague social change.*

So, I am supposed to assume that Lawrence is not interested in having anarchists influence social change? I guess I don't get it. What the hell are we doing if not trying to influence social change with our ideas? Should we all pack it in and go home? Are we revolutionaries or not?

*Their self-evident nature is not to be questioned—precisely because they are declarations of past, current, and future NEFAC strategy. Real critical and non-ideological questions on these topics would begin not with "how?" but rather "is it desirable and/or possible for anar-*



chists?"

Wow, heavy man. Like a real existential trip dude. I mean really, since anarchy is everything and nothing at the same time, could we even begin to discuss a practical grounding in reality with our politics? I mean, what is reality anyways?

Okay, bear with me... at some point "we" did ask if it were "desirable and/or possible for anarchists" to actually be a relevant force to effect social change, and decided it was. This has informed our entire political project, and yes, our ideology. Deal with it.

## Lawrence responds:

A neo-Platformist would be a person or organization that takes the 1926 Makhno/Mett/Arshinov (et al) Organizational Platform as their point of departure or model for all current attempts at creating an anarcho-communist organization. Members of NEFAC (and other such groups) have been at pains to explain that they are not blind followers of the document, but are engaging with it as a set of broad guidelines. A Platformist would be someone or some organization that used the document at the general time it was first written. A neo-Platformist would be anyone using that model now; since there's no continuity between the activists, writers, and organizers using the Platform contemporarily and those who may have used it half a century ago, it is appropriate to place the "neo-" prefix before the archaic term. I hope that's not too confusing. If you prefer to call yourself or NEFAC "Platformist" that's fine by me, but it seems inappropriate historically. I see no smear, nor did I intend one; I am trying to be accurate in my descriptions. There have been plenty of substantive critiques of the Platform made prior to my review of *NEA*, and really my review is based on what was actually in that issue rather than taking on the Platform itself.

In terms of having a readership and trying to attract a sympathetic audience, that's fine; I have no problem with that. Those who are attracted will eventually find the kinds of publishing projects they desire. The problem is not that *NEA* has a readership and an audience; the problem is that *NEA* only contains essays written by people who share the same set of assumptions,

and that the target audience will only be interested or find those essays relevant if they already share that same set of assumptions.

MJ's use of the term anarchist with quotation marks to describe Voltairine De Cleyre's essays indicates that he didn't think that her essays were authentically anarchist; they were obviously used as indicators of falseness or irony. As a writer who cares about writing, I do indeed have a good grasp on the ways that quotation marks can be used. And that does not include their use as markers of irony. But don't take my word for it. *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Thirteenth Edition, 1982), an authoritative guide to proper (American) English usage in print, has this to say:

Words used in an ironic sense may be enclosed in quotation marks [however,] such use...should always be regarded as a last resort, to be used when the irony would otherwise be lost. Skillfully prepared for, an ironic meaning seldom eludes the reader even if quotation marks are not used. (p. 173, section 6.68)

Then there's Theodor Adorno, who wrote in a 1990 essay entitled "Punctuation Marks":

Quotation marks are to be rejected as an ironic device. For they exempt the writer from the spirit whose claim is inherent in irony, and they violate the very concept of irony by separating it from the matter at hand and presenting the predetermined judgment on the subject... Where there is something which needs to be said, indifference to literary form almost always indicates dogmatization of the content. The blind verdict of quotation marks is its graphic gesture."

Quotation marks are used to indicate that whatever is inside them is a quotation, something that somebody actually said or wrote. That's why they're called quotation marks.

In terms of reviewing a book whose content you (and others) have decided is "dated" and "not especially relevant," the question, then, is why bother writing a dismissive review of it? Why not just ignore it? If the point is to show everyone who reads *NEA* that anything ever written by a person who

describes themselves as anarchist has to be directly relevant to NEFAC's particular way of struggling (or "the struggles of today" as you put it), then you have succeeded. And perhaps the use of dogmatizing ironic quotation marks is appropriate after all. That is the reason I and others have labeled NEFAC and its offshoots sectarian—you all have decided that the criteria for being considered an anarchist is magically connected to your particular choice of struggles.

Naturally the same thing can be said about my review of *NEA*: why do I insist on giving it the importance to write a long review of it? So that you and I can have exactly this kind of discussion. It shows that I take your project seriously, even though I obviously have many criticisms of it. And I take it seriously on its own terms, not those I might prefer it to have; that is why my criticisms are not sectarian.

You ask about the "lasting contributions" infoshops and the like have "made to the development of anarchist praxis in North America." I cannot possibly answer that question because I don't know how to judge them by those criteria. As I asked in my review, it might be interesting to figure out how to judge the effectiveness of any given anarchist project, but how is that to be done? What does "the development of anarchist praxis" look like? Besides, Phebus didn't mention anything about the relative effectiveness of the projects that grew, all he said was that the time of their growth was depressing "for anarchists." I asked how that could be? Now you're bringing quality into a discussion about quantity, which changes everything.

As far as the anti-MAI actions in Montreal, yes indeed, I do wonder why Phebus didn't mention those—and plenty of other actions in which anarchists played a role, whether small or significant. That was exactly my point about his very shallow analysis of what happened before and during Seattle. My implicit question was why Phebus seemed to believe only what the mainstream media said about Seattle? Nobody but other anarchists would be able to put Seattle into a wider anarchist analysis. I only used Eugene as one example of something that looked an awful lot like some of what captured people's imaginations about

Seattle, but there were a few more similar events which occurred elsewhere.

For me, an authentically critical appraisal would necessarily include a reexamination of one's assumptions. Nowhere in any document from NEFAC or any other neo-Platformist group has there ever been such a questioning. You all have the Answer, while some of the rest of us want to ask more questions. As I said, the questions that interest me begin with "Is it desirable and/or possible?" or "why?" All you seem to be interested in is "How?" which assumes the answers to all questions. This difference in our questions pretty much sums up the differences in approach between *NEA* and *Anarchy*; it is also a decent shortcut to explain the difference between ideology and theory.

Your assumption that I am not interested in having anarchists influence social change is just that—your assumption. Where have I ever said this? What basis do you have for making such an assumption? You're right—you don't get it. I am calling into question the way Phebus portrays the NEFAC agenda, because it sounds exactly like any liberal/leftist/leninist sect, with the same set of assumptions about how to intervene in other people's activities.

You don't like anyone calling into question either your assumptions or agenda; your defensiveness and poor attempts at irony speak volumes. But as a public organization with a periodical, as a group whose members consider themselves to be active within a particular politico-philosophical tradition, you must fully expect others who identify with that same tradition to call into question your relation to it. Any organization that calls itself anarchist will suffer the same fate, as the writers and editors of *Anarchy* know only too well.



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